



Frontispiece.
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Robert Burns

The
Poetical Works and Letters
of
Robert Burns.

With
Introduction, Notes, and Glossary
by
Robert Ford.

With Numerous Illustrations.

Collins' Clear-Type Press,

London and Glasgow.

*What toil was his ! but, know ye not, that ever in their pride
The unseen Heaven-sent messengers were walking by his side :
He felt their leaping fire, and heard far whispers shake and roll,
While visions, like the march of kings, went sweeping through his soul.*

*“ Thou shalt not sing of men,” they cried, “ girt up in sordid life,
Nor statesmen strutting on the stage their hour of party strife,
Nor the wild battle-field where death stalks red, and where the slain
Lie thicker than in harvest-fields the sheaves of shining grain.*

*“ Sing thou the thoughts that come to thee, to lighten up thy brow,
When, with a glory all around, thou standest by the plough ;
Sing the sweet loves of youth and maid, the streams that glide along,
And let the music of the lark leap light within thy song.*

*“ Sing thou of Scotland till she feels the rich blood fill her veins,
And rush along like sudden storms at all thy glorious strains ;
A thousand years will come and pass, but loyal to thy claim,
For ever in her heart shall glow the Pharos of thy fame.”*

*He came, and on his lips lay fire that touch'd his fervid song,
And scathed like lightning all that rose to skulk behind a wrong :
He sung, and on the lowly cot beside the happy stream
A halo fell upon the thatch, with heaven in its gleam.*

*And love grew sweeter at his touch, for full in him there lay
A mighty wealth of melting tones, and all their soft, sweet sway ;
He shaped their rapture and delight, for unto him was given
The power to wed to burning words the sweetest gift of Heaven.*

ALEXANDER ANDERSON.

BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION.

EDITIONS of the Poems and Songs of ROBERT BURNS, less or more complete in one volume, though seldom so exhaustive as the elegantly illustrated one here presented, are so common as to be counted by many scores of dozens; whilst Editions of his entire writings—embracing Correspondence, Commonplace Books, Tours, etc., and having elaborate introductions, biographical and critical, from the pens of eminent men of letters, and extending sometimes to four and occasionally to six large volumes—have been issued so frequently that they are found in the household of nearly every Scotsman at home and abroad laying any claim to patriotism or literary culture. Each succeeding year continues to add to the number of the one class or the other, if not both, and the supply is constantly found not to exceed the demand. Yea, indeed, the reverse is rather the experience, and for the manifest reason that the fame of the poet is not diminishing, but is regularly swelling into wider volume and deeper current with the rolling seasons. For half a century and more it has been found no longer true that Burns is a Scottish poet appealing only to Scotsmen. To the Scottish heart, of course, he has appealed, and ever will appeal first, and with the greatest power; but he is pre-eminently the poet of humanity—the poet *par excellence* of human love and affection—voicing the tenderer emotions common to men and women of every country, tribe, and tongue; and his liquid measures, in ever-increasing wave, are captivating hearts so constantly on a wider circle, that his domain ere long must not be less than the entire globe. No poet perhaps of any age or country—not even the mighty Shakespeare—has been so frequently edited; and of no devotee of the Muses anywhere—especially in relation to his life-conduct—have the successive estimates been more varied and conflicting. The little less than a hundred years dividing Henley from Currie include many jarring voices. Among the more capable, more deliberate, and better informed of his critical biographers, however—among those who, like William Scott Douglas and Dr. William Wallace, have been at pains to sift the back-door tittle-tattle, and to test no less minutely the irresponsible front-door chatter—Burns has constantly found his most ardent admirers, and his most eloquent and elaborate eulogists. Knowledge here, joined to charity, has always meant power. Full knowledge, with love, full sympathy—captivation—wonder. Half-knowledge, and the incapacity to appreciate environment, and the “moving why,” has ever meant disaster. And as it has been, so it certainly will be. But to this again perhaps later on; and meantime we will ask the reader to join us in a rapid survey of the poet’s familiar, and

often sadly chequered, but ever fascinating, and, in the main, proud and glorious career. A stormy one elementally, it was otherwise a brave day for Scotland when Robert Burns was born, as his susceptible countrymen are ever prone to remember. More than a fraction of them might not be able to tell without reference the day and year of the battle of Bannockburn: equally they might have to admit haziness in respect of many important incidents in the career of John Knox, and the work of the Reformation: but no one at all of Scottish blood and breed—man, woman, or child—will hesitate for a moment if asked to name the day and year on which the “blast o’ Janwar’ win’ blew hansel in” on our National Poet. And this is so—the date of his advent is engraved on every heart—not because he deduced his birth “from loins enthroned and rulers of the earth,” but because rather—

“Through care, and pain, and want, and woe,
With wounds that only death could heal;
Tortures—the poor alone can know,
The proud alone can feel;

“He kept his honesty and truth,
His independent tongue and pen,
And moved, in manhood as in youth,
Pride of his fellow men.”

And further because

“His is that language of the heart,
To which the answering heart would speak—
Thought, word, that bids the warm tears start,
Or the smile light the cheek;

And his that music, to whose tone
The common pulse of man keeps time,
In cot or castle’s mirth or moan,
In cold or sunny clime.”

To thoroughly appreciate the work of some men it is necessary first to know their lives. In the case of Burns, his life can be best appreciated by first knowing his work. But to proceed. The poet’s father, William Burnes (so he always spelled his name)—a man of superior understanding and uncommon worth—was the son of a farmer in the county of Kincardine. Some short time after the Rebellion of 1745—in which, by the way, it has been alleged, he took a share—he passed south from his father’s declining situation, seeking to improve his circumstances. In the neighbourhood of Edinburgh he obtained employment for a time, as a gardener. Subsequently he found his way into Ayrshire, where, becoming gardener to Mr. Fergusson of Doonholm, and leasing a few acres of land for a nursery, he erected with his own hands the familiar clay cottage at Alloway, on the banks of the Doon, to which, in December, 1757, when he was thirty-six

years old, he brought home, from Maybole, as his bride, Agnes Brown, destined to enjoy immortality as the mother of the foremost song-writer of Europe. In this cottage—a fair semblance of which is still preserved, forming a veritable Mecca, to which many thousands of admirers from all parts of the world gravitate yearly—the poet was born on the 25th January, 1759. A tradition tells of how the clay bigging gave way to a violent storm soon after the notable birth, and how mother and child had to be carried at midnight to the shelter of a neighbour's dwelling (herein the "hansel" referred to in the song of "Rovin' Robin"). But the willing hands that first reared the somewhat primitive habitation soon restored it, walls and roof, and Love was again in his cottage. Robert Burns, the first-born of a family of six children, was then, as we have seen, the son of a poor man; poor, as the worldling estimates wealth, but rich in moral worth, and in integrity and nobility of character: to quote his son—"a gentleman who derived his patent of nobility direct from Almighty God." His brain-power, his sturdy independence, his intense love and pride of Country, and all that was superior in his nature—as well as his everlasting hypochondria—Burns inherited from his father. From his mother he drew his lyrical gift, together with his wit and his mirth. She had a fine complexion, we are told, and had bright, dark eyes, and cheerful spirits; and her memory was stored with snatches of old Scottish songs and ballads, a love for which Robert drew in with her milk. Describing the household of William Burnes, John Murdoch, the school-master of Robert and Gilbert, and a common friend besides of the family, wrote in 1799:—"This worthy woman, Agnes Brown, had the most thorough esteem for her husband of any woman I ever knew. And I can by no means wonder that she highly esteemed him; for I myself have always considered William Burnes as by far the best of the human race that ever I had the pleasure of being acquainted with—and many a worthy character I have known. I can cheerfully join with Robert in the last line of his epitaph—borrowed from Goldsmith:—

‘And ev’n his failings lean’d to virtue’s side.’

He was an excellent husband, if I may judge from his assiduous attention to the care and comfort of his worthy partner; and from her affectionate behaviour to him, as well as her unwearied attention to the duties of a mother. He was a tender and affectionate father; he took pleasure in leading his children in paths of virtue; not driving them, as some parents do, to the performance of duties to which they themselves are averse. . . . O, for a world of such dispositions! We should then have no wars."

These comments help briefly to show the splendid source whence our poet sprung, and to indicate the healthy and stimulating moral atmosphere in which he spent his early years; as also to explain the reverence in which he held his father at all times; and to afford the hint, scarcely required, as to where he found the central figure, and no less the inspiration, for his widely esteemed and beautiful picture of "The Cottar's Saturday

Night." Robert had two and a half years' schooling at Alloway, when, in 1766, with the view of providing better for his growing family, and to be able to keep them all about himself, rather than see any of them hired out to others, his father entered on a lease of the farm of Mount Oliphant, a couple of miles distant from the seven-acre croft he had hitherto cultivated. This larger venture had to be started partly with borrowed money, which transaction proved the first step on the road to ruin. The situation from this point, however, might have been retrieved. But the soil was bitter and unyielding, and there was loss of cattle by accident and disease. A death occurred in the proprietorship, and the management of the estate fell into the hands of a factor. Now they were in the "gled's grips." This functionary was one of the type depicted in "The Twa Dogs"—indeed, the very man—who delighted to "stamp and threaten, curse and swear." As a consequence, disputes arose between the official and the tenant, and harsh and threatening letters arrived at Mount Oliphant. "My indignation yet boils," wrote the poet to Dr. Moore, twenty years later, "at the threatening, insolent epistles from the Scoundrel Tyrant, which used to set us all in tears." Eleven penurious years were spent here, crowded with hard work and extreme vexation of spirit. Robert, in the sixth, at the age of thirteen—a child yet—was "helping to thrash, and proving a dexterous ploughman for his years." In another two years he was the principal labourer on the farm. But all effort for a decent living was in vain. The experience broke the spirit of the now ageing farmer. It soured the spirit of his poet-son, whose shoulders were already bowed as the result of unceasing toil. There was but one glint of sunshine to relieve the prevailing gloom of the Mount Oliphant lease. It was on the "hairst-rig" in one of the fields of this farm, that the poet, inspired by the "modest gracefu' mien" of Nelly Kilpatrick, his partner-in-work, composed, in his fifteenth summer, his first love song—"Handsome Nell." What joy to him, could he have dreamed on these barren acres how many more glowing lyrics were to succeed that simple effusion; and that it was not by farming but by song-making he was to be "twice blessed," and his memory would be revered from zone to zone through countless generations! And yet, perhaps, it was better he had no such dream.

Removing in 1777 to the larger farm of Lochlea, or Lochlie, near Tarbolton, the conditions of the family for a time seemed to improve. But the terms of the lease here had not been properly stated in writing. The consequence was a lawsuit between landlord and tenant; and "after three years' tossing and whirling in the vortex of litigation," writes the poet, "my father was just saved from absorption in jail by a phthisical consumption, which, after two years' promises, kindly stepped in and snatched him away." Ere the father had yielded up his gentle spirit, Robert had attended school for a season at Kirkoswald, and learned to "take his glass." To give his manners a "brush," he had put in some



drill at a dancing school in Tarbolton (this in absolute defiance of his father's commands); and though he worked hard every day on the farm, wherever two or three lads and lasses were met for social enjoyment in the evening, he was sure to be in their midst, a ruling spirit; and his heart already, as he tells, being "completely tinder, was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other." Out of the twenty young lasses who attended this dancing, there was scarcely one on whom his fancy did not rest for a space, and whose charms he did not celebrate in song. And yet his evenings were not regularly spent in a giddy whirl. He started a debating club in Tarbolton, in which he argued with astonishing power. He became a Freemason. With thoughts of marriage in his head, and despairing of making a living by farming, he rented, with Gilbert, some acres from his father on which to grow flax, and spent a season in Irvine learning the art of flax-dressing. And yet, amid all, he had been reading hard, and over a wider course than many country fellows of his years in any station of life.—"The Spectator," Pope's Works, some plays of Shakespeare, Tull and Dickson on Agriculture, "The Pantheon," Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding," Stackhouse's "History of the Bible," Boyle's "Lectures," Allan Ramsay's Works, Taylor's "Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin," Harvey's "Meditations," and a select collection of English songs, etc. "The collection of songs," he says, "was my *vade mecum*. I pored over them, driving my cart, or walking to labour. Song by song, verse by verse: carefully noting the tender or sublime from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I owe much to this for my criticism, such as it is." Amid the incessant toil and gallivanting of the Lochlie period, it is worth noting, were composed notably "The Lass of Cessnock Banks," "Mary Morrison," "John Barleycorn," the lament for "Mailie," "Corn Rigs," "My Nanie O," and "Green Grow the Rashes"—very marvellous productions by a busy countryman not yet twenty-four. Some of them commanded his father's admiration. At Mount Oliphant William Burnes had said to his wife, while pointing to Robert—"Whoever lives to see it, something extraordinary will come from that boy." In succeeding years he watched with concern the development of his complex nature: and at Lochlie, while he lay dying and his family stood near his bed, he said there was one of his children whose future he could not think of without fear. Robert asked, "O, father, is it me you mean?" "Ay," responded the dying man, "it is even you, Robert." Burns, in a torrent of tears, it is told, had at once to leave the room, nor could he control his feelings during the few hours which his father afterwards lived.

William Burnes died in February, 1784, and the same year Robert and Gilbert rented from Gavin Hamilton the farm of Mossiel, within a mile of Mauchline. "This farm," writes Gilbert, "consisted of one hundred and eighteen acres. It was stocked by the individual savings of the whole family, and was a joint concern among us. Every member of the family was allowed ordinary wages for the labour he performed. My brother's

allowance and mine was seven pounds per annum each"—a scrimp enough sum, surely, for two spirited young men! but neither evidently thought his lot too hard. Thither all removed in the course of the year. And "I entered on this farm with a full resolution, 'Come, go to, I will be wise!'" writes the poet. "I read farming books; I calculated crops; I attended markets; and, in short, in spite of the devil, the world, and the flesh, I believe I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying in bad seed; the second, from a late harvest, we lost half of both our crops. This overset all my wisdom, and I returned, 'like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.' I now began to be known in the neighbourhood as a maker of rhymes. The first of my poetic offspring that saw the light, was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two Reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatis personæ* in my 'Holy Fair.' I had an idea myself that the piece had some merits; but, to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend who was very fond of these things, and told him I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain side of both clergy and laity, it met with a roar of applause. 'Holy Willie's Prayer' next made its appearance, and alarmed the kirk-session so much, that they held three several meetings to look over their holy artillery, if any of it was pointed against profane rhymers. Unluckily for me, my idle wanderings led me on another side, point-blank, within reach of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story alluded to in my printed poem, 'The Lament.' 'Twas a shocking affair, which I cannot yet bear to recollect, and it had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart, and mistaken the reckoning of rationality. I gave up my part of the farm to my brother; as in truth it was only nominally mine (for stock I had none to embark in it), and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica. Before leaving my native country, however, I resolved to publish my poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as in my power; I thought they had merit: and 'twas a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even tho' it should never reach my ears—a poor negro-driver—or perhaps gone to the world of spirits, a victim to that inhospitable clime. I can truly say, that *pauvre inconnu* as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of myself as I have at this moment. It was ever my opinion that the great, unhappy mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance or mistaken notions of themselves. To know myself had been all along my constant study. I weighed myself alone; I balanced myself with others; I watched every means of information, how much ground I occupied as a man and as a poet; I studied assiduously Nature's design, where she seemed to have intended the various *lights* and *shades* in my character. I was pretty sure my poems would meet with some applause; but at the worst the roar of the

Atlantic would deafen the voice of Censure, and the novelty of West Indian scenes would make me forget neglect."

Up to the point of his establishment at Mossgiel, and during the succeeding three years, the poet's temperance and frugality, on the testimony of his brother, were everything that could be wished. Before leaving Lochlie, however, he had deviated from propriety in his relations with women, and Elizabeth Paton, a servant of his mother's, bore him a daughter (the "dear-bought Bess" of the "Welcome"). And notwithstanding the ill-luck that attended his farming efforts—ardent and penurious at all times—the brief Mossgiel period witnessed the production of much of the freshest and most vigorous of his more elaborated poetical work. Here were composed the graphic and inspiring epistles to Lapraik and to Davie: "Death and Doctor Hornbook," "The Twa Herds, or the Holy Tulyie"; "The Jolly Beggars"; "Hallowe'en"; "The Cottar's Saturday Night"; "Holy Willie's Prayer"; "The Holy Fair"; "The Twa Dogs"; "The Ordination"; "Address to the Unco Guid"; "The Vision"; "To a Mountain Daisy"; and many more of his splendidly graphic and ever-engaging poems. Within the period indicated, too, he fell in love with Jean Armour, whom, as already hinted, he brought to grief and shame. She bore him twins. He gave her a writing acknowledging her as his wife; but old Armour refused to have the poet for a son-in-law, and induced his daughter to destroy the document. Quarrelling ensued, with strong language, and Burns became estranged temporarily even from Jean—who equally for a time denied the poet her countenance. The shuttle of incident was indeed flying furiously, and surprising designs were appearing. In the midst of the Armour bickerings the evidently never-to-be-explained "Highland Mary" episode occurred. Acting as dairy-maid at Coilsfield, near by, or serving as nurse-maid in the family of Gavin Hamilton, and living within a stone-throw of the Armour household, was Mary Campbell, an extremely innocent or else a rather giddy young lass—it is impossible yet to say which. With her Burns immediately fell violently in love. They met on the banks of Faile and plighted their never-ending troth. In a rhapsody of feeling he wrote:—

"I hae sworn by the Heavens to my Mary,
I hae sworn by the Heavens to be true;
And sae may the Heavens forget me,
When I forget my vow!"

With the proceeds of his poems, publishing at Kilmarnock, the poet proposed to make her his bride, and take her with him to the West Indies. Mary, as report goes, returned to her home in the West Highlands to prepare for their nuptials, but was taken ill of malignant fever at Greenock, and died there, where she was buried, and where her grave, marked by a stone telling her brief history, is shown. But from Burns—from whom we know almost all of the incident that is known—and who,

come and go who might, never ceased to love Jean Armour—we hear no more of his Highland lassie—not a single word in verse or prose—until years after, when, as a married man, living happy and contented, and yet hoping for prosperity at Ellisland, in a transport of sudden remembrance, he wrote, making her name immortal, “To Mary in Heaven,” and later, “Highland Mary.”

The publication of the famous Kilmarnock Edition—*Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*—a perfect copy of which, by the bye, was recently sold in Edinburgh for 545 guineas—although it brought the poet only about 20 pounds, its circulation yet created a stir, the swing of which completely changed the current of the author's life. On the remonstrance of his admiring friend, Dr Blacklock, the blind poet, he was induced to abandon the idea of proceeding to Jamaica—although his berth had been actually taken, and his chest was on the way to Greenock, and he had composed “The Gloomy Night is Gathering Fast,” which was to be the last effort of his muse in Caledonia—and he was persuaded, by a happy stroke for Scottish song (perhaps for the poet personally as well) to proceed instead to Edinburgh, and arrange for the issue of a second and enlarged edition of his poems.

In Edinburgh—which he reached in the close of November, 1786—he felt, as he tells us, in “a new world.” He posted his way thither without a single acquaintance of influence in town, and without a single letter of introduction in his pocket. But his fame had preceded him, and he was received with open arms by all classes. The learned, the fashionable, the witty, and the curious, crowded, elbowing each other in their anxiety to gaze on the inspired ploughman. He was the lion of the season. The best doors in the Capital—then much more a centre of fashion than now—were opened wide to admit him to dinner-tables, where he was the centre of attraction. Amid learned pundits and lords and ladies, in assemblages which included Professor Dugald Stewart and Principal Robertson, the Honourable Henry Erskine, Dr. Hugh Blair, Dr. Adam Ferguson, Dr. Gregory, Fraser Tytler of Woodhouselee, Lords Monboddo, Glencairn, and Eglinton, the fascinating and witty Jean, Duchess of Gordon, the “heavenly” Miss Burnet, and everybody else of the time who was anybody in particular. For the best of them to have him as their guest for an evening was the highest honour of the season. Wonderful if he held his head amidst it all. But he did, bearing himself cool and unastonished, putting forth no claim which there was not strength in him, as well as about him, to vindicate. “It needs no effort of imagination,” remarks Lockhart, “to conceive what the sensations of an isolated set of scholars (almost all either clergymen or professors) must have been in the presence of this big-boned, black-browed, brawny stranger, with his great flashing eyes, who, having forced his way among them from the plough-tail at a single stride, manifested in the whole strain of his bearing and conversation a most thorough conviction, that in the society of the most eminent

men of his nation he was exactly where he was entitled to be." Yea, he hardly deigned to flatter them by exhibiting even an occasional symptom of being flattered by their notice. And his brilliant conversational powers struck everyone with whom he came in contact with almost as much admiration as his poetry. The Duchess of Gordon is reported to have said that he was the only man whose conversation ever "carried her completely off her feet." And Sir Walter Scott, who, as a lad of fifteen, with an observing eye, met Burns at the house of Professor Ferguson, forty years afterwards wrote:—"There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling and interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. . . . I have only to add that his dress corresponded with his manner. He was like a farmer dressed in his best to dine with the *Laird*. I do not speak in *malam partem*, when I say, I never saw a man in company with his superiors in station and information, more perfectly free from either the reality or the affectation of embarrassment. I was told, but did not observe it, that his address to females was extremely deferential, and always with a turn either to the pathetic or humorous, which engaged their attention particularly. I have heard the late Duchess of Gordon remark this."

How curiously it would have struck those Edinburgh gentry—all notables of their time as they were—could they have realised that a hundred years hence their names were to be familiar to their countrymen, not from any virtue in themselves, but, excepting one or two, solely because of their association with Robert Burns. Yet such is the fact—not less suggestive now, that a single year afterwards, when the lion's mane had got slightly cropped, or his roar had ceased to thrill, many of their doors were shut against him. For the time being, however, something was done for the poet in Edinburgh. Creech undertook to publish the new edition; the gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt gave their names for a hundred copies; and he felt, as he expressed himself to Gavin Hamilton, in a fair way of becoming as eminent as Thomas à Kempis or John Bunyan. Hanging about in the city—waiting for the issue of his volume, or more particularly for Creech's tardy settlement—he joined the Society of the Crochallan Fencibles, and made some free-and-easy contributions to *The Merry Muses of Caledonia*: further, he embarked with his young friend, Robert Ainslie, in a few days' tour of the Southern Border counties. His First Edinburgh Edition, besides greatly extending his fame, put somewhere about five hundred pounds in his

pocket. With this to start him, he thought of striking into a new line of life, and projects were mooted for his consideration—a commission in the Army, by Mrs. Dunlop—a Salt-officership, by Adam Smith, etc. But for the moment he returned to Mossgiel, where he was received with pleasure and pride by his mother, his brothers, and sisters. He presented Gilbert with two hundred pounds. He made his peace with Jean Armour, who cordially received him. But he was soon back in the Capital, from thence to start in company with William Nicol, of the High School, on a three weeks' tour of the Highlands; in the course of which he visited the Field of Bannockburn—met Neil Gow at Dunkeld—spent two days at Blair Castle with the Duke and Duchess of Athole—saw the Birks of Aberfeldy—proceeded as far north as Inverness—then went round by way of Elgin to Aberdeen—spent some time with the Duke and Duchess of Gordon, at Gordon Castle, and afterwards visited his family relatives in Kincardineshire. Arrived in Edinburgh in the middle of September, he spent more time in badgering Creech for the remainder of his account; but would have abandoned the task in December had he not met with an accident to his knee which laid him up in his lodgings in St. James' Square for several weeks. Simultaneously he made the acquaintance of Mrs. M'Lehose, a handsome and lively "grass widow" of easy manners, ready wit, and literary tastes, between whom and Burns a passionate and extraordinary correspondence ensued: he writing her as "Sylvander": she writing him as "Clarinda." Had "Clarinda" been a free woman he might have married her. It is hard to say what he might not have done about this time. Not long before, on the lady's confession, he made a serious proposal to Peggy Chalmers. But, in the circumstances, he did better than marry either of these very charming ladies. When, in February, 1788, he at last got a settlement with Creech, he returned to Mossgiel. On his arrival he found Jean Armour "banished like a martyr" from her father's house on account of her second transgression, with the poet: she bore him twins again, both of whom died in infancy. But for the present he found her house and home, and supported her. Returned to Edinburgh in March, he settled with Miller of Dalswinton for a lease of the farm of Ellisland, on the banks of the Nith, near Dumfries, and a month later Jean and he were privately married. How disastrous (no less to himself than to his partner-in-shame) had he married any other! In June, the poet went to reside on his farm, his wife remaining at Mossgiel, getting instruction in dairy work from his mother and sisters, until a new house should be built at Ellisland. In December he took her home, and from all known accounts the union was a perfectly happy one. Among all the women he met, certainly no one had the abiding charm for him possessed by Jean Armour, and it is doubtful—gravely doubtful, indeed—if he could have lived as agreeably to the end with any other woman. Her practical ideas formed just the proper antidote to his theoretical notions, and in the experience of marriage with her he soon realised this. "If I have not got polite tattle, modish manners, and fashionable dress," he wrote to Peggy



Photo by G W Wilson & Co, Ltd

Burns's Birthplace—Alloway, Ayr.



Photo by G W Wilson & Co, Ltd

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Mossgiel.

Chalmers, "I am not sickened and disgusted with the multiform curse of boarding-school affectation: and I have got the handsomest figure, the sweetest temper, the soundest constitution, and the kindest heart in the country." How Jean took the poet, too, cherishing him, with all his faults, upbraiding none, affords the hint as to how his countrymen should take him; cherishing the good with grateful heart, and ignoring the evil, never forgetting that "in the course of justice none of us should see salvation."

Ellisland, beautifully situated, was "a poet's choice." And though Burns set before himself a model domestic life here, and for a time maintained it, working hard, conducting family worship in his household, and going to church regularly—even although he found Mr. Kilpatrick rather "drouthy"; though he was beloved at home, respected by his servants, and esteemed by his neighbours, ere the middle of January, 1790, we find him writing to Gilbert, "This farm has undone my enjoyment of myself. It is a ruinous affair." If the farmer did not succeed, the poet, however, prospered at Ellisland; and the brief period of ruinous farming on the banks of the Nith is notable as that in which, amid many other delectable and immortal pieces, he composed "To Mary in Heaven," the "Elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson," and "Tam o' Shanter"—the first, as touching the sublimity of pathos, esteemed by every heart—the last regarded by many capable critics as perhaps the supreme effort of his miraculous genius; and, of a truth, "The Jolly Beggars" alone may be put before it. We should note that, seeing "ruin had him again in the wind," the poet in 1789 applied for and obtained an appointment as an exciseman, with a salary, to begin with, of fifty pounds a year. It has also to be acknowledged that Burns had not quit hold of Ellisland until he had to plead guilty to the charge of a breach of conjugal fidelity,—committed during his wife's absence in Ayrshire—his fellow-sinner being Anna Park, the serving-maid and niece of Mrs. Hislop, the hostess of the Globe Tavern, Dumfries. From the issue of this indiscretion—the poet's second "Elizabeth" (taken home and nursed by Mrs. Burns, without a murmur), came the Burns-Thomson family—all of estimable character and clever—several of whom, and particularly the late Mrs. David Wingate, who had the poet's eyes to perfection, were known to the writer. But enough of a painful story. At Martinmas, in the year 1791, the poet surrendered the lease of his farm to Mr. Miller, and sold his stock, and removed with his family to the town of Dumfries, to pursue there to the end—alas! now not far off—the double office of whisky-gauger to the British Government, and song-maker-in-chief to the world at large. Of the whisky-gauging, further than that he discharged every duty attaching to the office conscientiously and well, and was complimented for his accuracy, we have nothing to say. The pity is that work less hazardous and more congenial was not found him to do. Perhaps it was not easy to do much for Burns, but more might have been tried. We have seen his proneness to fall into error, and the worst has not been blinked in this brief statement. Yet, as

Carlyle so well puts it, "We are far from regarding him as guilty before the world, as guiltier than the average; nay, from doubting that he is less guilty than one of ten thousand. Tried at a tribunal far more rigid than that where the *Plebiscita* of common civic reputations are pronounced, he has seemed to us even there less worthy of blame than of pity and wonder. But the world is habitually unjust in its judgments of such men; unjust on many grounds, of which this one may be stated as the substance. It decides, like a court of law, by dead statutes; and not positively but negatively, less on what is done right, than on what is or is not done wrong. Not the few inches of deflection from the mathematical orbit, which are so easily measured, but the ratio of these to the whole diameter, constitutes the real aberration. This orbit may be a planet's, its diameter the breadth of the solar system; or it may be a city hippodrome; nay, the circle of a ginhorse, its diameter a score of feet or paces. But the inches of deflection only are measured; and it is assumed that the diameter of the ginhorse, and that of the planet, will yield the same ratio when compared with them! Here lies the root of many a blind, cruel condemnation of Burnses, Swifts, Rousseaus, which one never listens to with approval. Granted the ship comes into harbour with shrouds and tackle damaged: the pilot is blameworthy; he has not been all-wise and all-powerful; but to know *how* blameworthy, tell us first whether his voyage has been round the Globe, or only to Ramsgate and the Isle of Dogs."

Burns's voyage was round the Globe, and all in a season of rough weather. His five years in Dumfries could not, however, have been marked by the debauch with which his character has been charged by the tattlers. There may have been an occasional carouse with friends and admirers at Woodley Park, and at the Globe Tavern, and elsewhere—small blame to him if there was—but the occasions marked by excess must have been rare rather than frequent; for the period, as the discerning reader of his life cannot help noting, was one of almost constant mental activity. Through it all he faithfully discharged his Excise duties, riding over about two hundred miles every week; and scarcely a day passed that did not bring him admirers from a distance, and which besides—and this particularly—did not embrace its stent of song-making and letter-writing. And such songs, and such letters! No one reading them surely can believe that they emanated from a drink-befogged brain. Nay, but so severe a critic was he of himself, that many of the former were written three and four times. His first song for Johnson was delivered in May, 1787—about a year before Ellisland was reached; his last in July, 1796—the month of his death; and all through the period indicated he never ceased, except in brief intervals, to contribute to *The Musical Museum*—so that Cromek saw among Johnson's papers no fewer than one hundred and eighty-four of the effusions that comprise that collection written out in Burns's own hand. His first letter to George Thomson was penned in September, 1792—a year after his arrival in Dumfries—and between then

and his death—less than four years—in addition to collecting scores of wandering ballads, with their airs, and writing about them at length—not to Thomson alone, but to other correspondents—he contributed to Thomson's *Select Melodies* exactly one hundred and twenty songs that were either partly or wholly original. Drink indeed! Debauch forsooth! He must have toiled like a galley slave. It is the Dumfries period that is constantly referred to by those who have stigmatised Burns as a "pot-house reveller" and the associate of vile persons. But it was the shrill shriek of the Auld Licht Clergy, maddened to fury as they were by the poet's satires—though never levelled at Religion, but at the abuses attending its observances only—that set the gossips' tongues a-wagging, and caused mole-hills to be magnified into mountains. Findlater, his supervisor in the Excise, who was in almost daily communication with the poet, from the time he came to live in Dumfries until his death, says: "I believe I saw more of him than any other individual had occasion to see, after he became an officer of Excise, and I never beheld anything like the gross enormities with which he is now charged. That, when set down in an evening with a few friends whom he liked, he was apt to prolong the social hour beyond the bounds which prudence would dictate, is unquestionable; but in his family, I will venture to say, he was never seen otherwise than attentive and affectionate in a high degree." The Rev. James Gray, who had frequent opportunities of observing the poet, both at his own fireside and in the general intercourse of society, bears similar testimony, adding: "He numbered among his intimate friends many of the most respectable inhabitants of Dumfries and the vicinity. Many of these were attached to him by ties that the hand of calumny, busy as it was, could never snap asunder. They admired the poet for his genius, and loved the man for the candour, generosity, and kindness of his nature. His early friends clung to him through good and bad report, with a zeal and fidelity that prove their disbelief of malicious stories circulated to his disadvantage. Among them are some of the most distinguished characters in this country, and not a few females eminent for delicacy, taste, and genius. He was endeared to them even by his misfortunes, and they will retain for his memory that affectionate veneration which virtue alone inspires."

Excellent testimonials these, from very reliable sources, and welcome. But yet, as we have said, the best proof of the uniform good behaviour of the poet during the Dumfries period, is found in the statement of his work in these years; its volume and quality. From no other single individual in the world did there ever emanate, even in the whole course of his life, such a volume and variety of popular lyrical melody. The feat of its production is a marvel of its kind, entirely without a parallel. And what was his motive in the work? Not personal fame, in any distinct measure. Not to make money, though he was often much in need of it; Thomson offered to pay him, indeed, but he refused to accept a penny, replying:

"You may think my songs either *above* or *below* price: for they shall absolutely be the one or the other: to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, etc., would be downright sodomy of soul!" Further, he desired his interference in the work to be known as little as possible; and it was revealed only because it was too great to be held a secret. As lief think of inclosing Niagara! The motive, the incentive, sprang simply, beautifully, and grandly from the life-long desire of his great warm heart that he

"For puir auld Scotland's sake
Some usefu' plan or book could make,
Or sing a sang at least."

From that, and from nothing else: and how well he accomplished his aim the world knows. By the subtle witchery of his lyric muse he has knit in a closer bond man with man, brother with brother, lad with lass; making love a holier, sweeter thing than before had been well realised. Carlyle, ever chary of praise, and never once a flatterer, reckoned the songs of Burns as "by far the best that Britain has yet produced," and adding, he says: "Independently of the clear, manly, heartfelt sympathy that ever pervades his poetry, his songs are honest in another point of view; in form as well as in spirit. They do not *affect* to be set to music, but they actually and in themselves are music; they have received their life, and fashioned themselves together, in the medium of Harmony, as Venus rose from the bosom of the sea. . . . With what tenderness he sings, yet with what vehemence and entirenness! There is a piercing wail in his sorrow, the purest rapture in his joy; he burns with the sternest ire, or laughs with the loudest or slyest mirth; and yet he is sweet and soft—'Sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet, and soft as their parting tear.' If we further take into account the immense variety of his subjects; how, from the loud flowing revel in 'Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut,' to the still, rapt enthusiasm of sadness of 'Mary in Heaven'; from the glad kind greeting of 'Auld Lang Syne,' or the comic archness of 'Duncan Gray,' to the fire-eyed fury of 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,' he has found a tone and words for every mood of man's heart—it will seem a small praise if we rank him as the first of all our Song-writers; for we know not where to find one worthy of being second to him."

After a brief illness—made briefer than it might have been by the horrors of poverty and the pain of leaving his wife and family entirely unprovided for—Robert Burns died in his house in the Mill-hole Brae (now Burns Street), Dumfries, on the 21st July, 1796. Some days before he said to his wife, "Don't be afraid, Jean; I will be more respected a hundred years after I am dead than I am now." True prophet, no less than true poet!

ROBERT FORD.

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BU.

House in which Burns Died—Dumfries.

POEMS AND SONGS

BY

ROBERT BURNS.

HANDSOME NELL.¹

Tune—"I am a man unmarried."

O ONCE I lov'd a bonie lass,
Aye, and I love her still ;
And whilst that virtue warms my breast,
I'll love my handsome Nell.

As bonie lasses I hae seen,
And mony full as braw ;
But, for a modest gracefu' mien,
The like I never saw.

A bonie lass, I will confess,
Is pleasant to the e'e ;
But, without some better qualities,
She's no a lass for me.

But Nelly's looks are blythe and sweet,
And what is best of a',
Her reputation is complete,
And fair without a flaw.

She dresses ay sae clean and neat,
Both decent and genteel ;
And then there's something in her gait
Gars ony dress look weel.

A gaudy dress and gentle air
May slightly touch the heart ;
But it's innocence and modesty
That polishes the dart.

'Tis this in Nelly pleases me,
 'Tis this enchants my soul;
 For absolutely in my breast
 She reigns without controul.

O TIBBIE, I HAE SEEN THE DAY.²

Tune—"Invercauld's Reel, or Strathspey."

Chorus.—O Tibbie, I hae seen the day,
 Ye wadna been sae shy;
 For laik o' gear ye lightly me,
 But, trowth, I care na by.

Yestreen I met you on the moor,
 Ye spak na, but gaed by like stoure;
 Ye geck at me because I'm poor,
 But fient a hair care I.

O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, etc.

When comin hame on Sunday last,
 Upon the road as I cam past,
 Ye snufft and gae your head a cast—
 But trowth I care't na by.

O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, etc.

I doubt na, lass, but ye may think,
 Because ye hae the name o' clink,
 That ye can please me at a wink,
 Whene'er ye like to try.

O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, etc.

But sorrow tak' him that's sae mean,
 Altho' his pouch o' coin were clean,
 Wha follows ony saucy quean,
 That looks sae proud and high.

O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, etc.

Altho' a lad were e'er sae smart,
 If that he want the yellow dirt,
 Ye'll cast your head anither airt,
 And answer him fu' dry.

O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, etc.

But if he hae the name o' gear,
Ye'll fasten to him like a brier,
Tho' hardly he, for sense or lear,
Be better than the kye.

O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, etc.

But, Tibbie, lass, tak' my advice :
Your daddie's gear maks you sae nice ;
The deil a ane wad spier your price,
Were ye as poor as I.

O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, etc.

There lives a lass beside yon park,
I'd rather hae her in her sark,
Than you wi' a' your thousand mark ;
That gars you look sae high.
O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, etc.

I DREAM'D I LAY.

I DREAM'D I lay where flowers were springing
Gaily in the sunny beam ;
List'ning to the wild birds singing,
By a falling crystal stream :
Straight the sky grew black and daring ;
Thro' the wood the whirlwinds rave ;
Trees with aged arms were warring,
O'er the swelling drumlie wave.

Such was my life's deceitful morning,
Such the pleasures I enjoy'd :
But lang or noon, loud tempests storming,
A' my flowery bliss destroy'd.
Tho' fickle fortune has deceiv'd me—
She promis'd fair, and perform'd but ill,
Of mony a joy and hope bereav'd me—
I bear a heart shall support me still.

THE RUINED FARMER.³

Tune—"Go from my window, Love, do."

THE sun he is sunk in the west,
 All creatures retirèd to rest,
 While here I sit, all sore beset,
 With sorrow, grief, and woe :
 And it's O, fickle Fortune, O !

The prosperous man is asleep,
 Nor hears how the whirlwinds sweep ;
 But Misery and I must watch
 The surly tempest blow :
 And it's O, fickle Fortune, O !

There lies the dear partner of my breast ;
 Her cares for a moment at rest :
 Must I see thee, my youthful pride,
 Thus brought so very low !
 And it's O, fickle Fortune, O !

There lie my sweet babes in her arms ;
 No anxious fear their hearts alarms ;
 But for their sake my heart does ache,
 With many a bitter throe :
 And it's O, fickle Fortune, O !

I once was by Fortune carest :
 I once could relieve the distrest :
 Now life's poor pittance hardly earn'd,
 My fate will scarce bestow :
 And it's O, fickle Fortune, O !

No comfort, no comfort I have !
 How welcome to me were the grave !
 But then my wife and children dear—
 O, whither would they go !
 And it's O, fickle Fortune, O !

O whither, O where shall I turn!
 All friendless, forsaken, forlorn!
 For, in this world, Rest or Peace
 I never more shall know!
 And it's O, fickle Fortune, O!

TRAGIC FRAGMENT.

ALL villain as I am—a damnèd wretch,
 A hardened, stubborn, unrepenting sinner,
 Still my heart melts at human wretchedness;
 And with sincere but unavailing sighs
 I view the helpless children of distress:
 With tears indignant I behold the oppressor
 Rejoicing in the honest man's destruction,
 Whose unsubmitting heart was all his crime.—
 Ev'n you, ye hapless crew! I pity you,
 Ye, whom the seeming good think sin to pity;
 Ye poor, despised, abandoned vagabonds,
 Whom Vice, as usual, has turn'd o'er to ruin.
 Oh! but for friends and interposing Heaven,
 I had been driven forth like you forlorn,
 The most detested, worthless wretch among you!
 O injured God! Thy goodness has endow'd me
 With talents passing most of my compeers,
 Which I in just proportion have abused—
 As far surpassing other common villains
 As Thou in natural parts has given me more.

THE TARBOLTON LASSES.⁴

If ye gae up to yon hill-tap,
 Ye'll there see bonie Peggy;
 She kens her father is a laird,
 And she forsooth's a leddy.
 There's Sophy tight, a lassie bright,
 Besides a handsome fortune:
 Wha canna win her in a night,
 Has little art in courtin.

Gae down by Faile, and taste the ale,
And tak a look o' Mysie ;
She's dour and din, a deil within,
But aiblins she may please ye.

If she be shy, her sister try,
Ye'll may be fancy Jenny ;
If ye'll dispense wi' want o' sense—
She kens herself she's bonie.

As ye gae up by yon hillside,
Speer in for bonie Bessy ;
She'll gie ye a beck, and bid ye light,
And handsomely address ye.

There's few sae bonie, nane sae guid,
In a' King George' dominion ;
If ye should doubt the truth o' this—
It's Bessy's ain opinion!

AH, WOE IS ME, MY MOTHER DEAR.⁵

Paraphrase of Jeremiah, 15th chap., 10th verse.

AH, woe is me, my Mother dear!
A man of strife ye've borne me:
For sair contention I maun bear;
They hate, revile, and scorn me.

I ne'er could lend on bill or band,
That five per cent. might blest me;
And borrowing, on the tither hand,
The de'il a ane wad trust me.

Yet I, a coin-denièd wight,
By Fortune quite discarded;
Ye see how I am, day and night,
By lad and lass blackguarded!

MONTGOMERIE'S PEGGY.⁶

ALTHO' my bed were in yon muir,
Amang the heather, in my plaidie ;
Yet happy, happy would I be,
Had I my dear Montgomerie's Peggy.
When o'er the hill beat surly storms,
And winter nights were dark and rainy ;
I'd seek some dell, and in my arms
I'd shelter dear Montgomerie's Peggy.
Were I a Baron proud and high,
And horse and servants waiting ready ;
Then a' 'twad gie o' joy to me,—
The sharn't with Montgomerie's Peggy.

THE PLOUGHMAN'S LIFE.

As I was a-wand'ring ae morning in spring,
I heard a young ploughman sae sweetly to sing ;
And as he was singin', thir words he did say,—
There's nae life like the ploughman's in the month o'
sweet May.

The lav'rock in the morning she'll rise frae her nest,
And mount i' the air wi' the dew on her breast,
And wi' the merry ploughman she'll whistle and sing,
And at night she'll return to her nest back again.

THE RONALDS OF THE BENNALS.⁷

IN Tarbolton, ye ken, there are proper young men,
And proper young lasses and a', man ;
But ken ye the Ronalds that live in the Bennals,
They carry the gree frae them a', man.

Their father's a laird, and weel he can spare't,
Braid money to tocher them a', man ;
To proper young men, he'll clink in the hand
Gowd guineas a hunder or twa, man.

There's ane they ca' Jean, I'll warrant ye've seen
As bonie a lass or as braw, man ;
But for sense and guid taste she'll vie wi' the best,
And a conduct that beautifies a', man.

The charms o' the min', the langer they shine,
The mair admiration they draw, man ;
While peaches and cherries, and roses and lilies,
They fade and they wither awa, man.

If ye be for Miss Jean, tak this frae a frien',
A hint o' a rival or twa, man ;
The Laird o' Blackbyre wad gang through the fire,
If that wad entice her awa, man.

The Laird o' Braehead has been on his speed,
For mair than a towmond or twa, man ;
The Laird o' the Ford will straught on a board,
If he canna get her at a', man.

Then Anna comes in, the pride o' her kin,
The boast of our bachelors a', man :
Sae sonsy and sweet, sae fully complete,
She steals our affections awa, man.

If I should detail the pick and the wale
O' lasses that live here awa, man,
The fau't wad be mine if they didna shine
The sweetest and best o' them a', man.

I lo'e her mysel, but darena weel tell,
My poverty keeps me in awe, man ;
For making o' rhymes, and working at times,
Does little or naething at a', man.

Yet I wadna choose to let her refuse,
Nor hae't in her power to say na, man :
For though I be poor, unnoticed, obscure,
My stomach's as proud as them a', man.

Though I canna ride in weel-booted pride,
 And flee o'er the hills like a craw, man,
 I can haud up my head wi' the best o' the breed,
 Though fluttering ever so braw, man.

My coat and my vest, they are Scotch o' the best
 O' pairs o' guid breeks I hae twa, man;
 And stockings and pumps to put on my stumps,
 And ne'er a wrang steek in them a', man.

My sarks they are few, but five o' them new,
 Twal' hundred, as white as the snaw, man.
 A ten shillings hat, a Holland cravat;
 There are no mony poets sae braw, man.

I never had freens weel stockit in means,
 To leave me a hundred or twa, man,
 Nae weel-tocher'd aunts, to wait on their drants,
 And wish them in hell for it a', man.

I never was cannie for hoarding o' money,
 Or clauhtin 't together at a', man;
 I've little to spend, and naething to lend,
 But deevil a shilling I awe, man

HERE'S TO THY HEALTH.^s

HERE'S to thy health, my bonie lass,
 Gude night and joy be wi' thee,
 I'll come nae mair to thy bower-door,
 To tell thee that I lo'e thee.
 O dinna think, my pretty pink,
 But I can live without thee:
 I vow and swear I dinna care,
 How lang ye look about ye.

Thou'rt ay sae free informing me,
 Thou hast nae mind to marry;
 I'll be as free informing thee,
 Nae time hae I to tarry:

I ken thy freens try ilka means
Frae wedlock to delay thee ;
Depending on some higher chance,
But fortune may betray thee.

I ken they scorn my low estate,
But that does never grieve me ;
For I'm as free as any he ;
Sma' siller will relieve me.

I'll count my health my greatest wealth,
Sae lang as I'll enjoy it ;
I'll fear nae scant, I'll bode nae want,
As lang's I get employment.

But far off fowls hae feathers fair,
And, ay until ye try them,
Tho' they seem fair, still have a care ;
They may prove as bad as I am.
But at twel at night, when the moon shines bright
My dear, I'll come and see thee ;
For the man that loves his mistress weel,
Nae travel makes him weary.

THE LASS OF CESSNOCK BANKS.⁹

ON Cessnock banks a lassie dwells ;
Could I describe her shape and mien ;
Our lasses a' she far excels,
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

She's sweeter than the morning dawn,
When rising Phoebus first is seen ;
And dew-drops twinkle o'er the lawn ;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

She's stately like yon youthful ash,
That grows the cowslip braes between,
And drinks the stream with vigour fresh ;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

She's spotless like the flow'ring thorn,
With flow'rs so white and leaves so green,
When purest in the dewy morn ;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her looks are like the vernal May,
When ev'ning Phœbus shines serene ;
While birds rejoice on every spray ;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her hair is like the curling mist,
That climbs the mountain-sides at e'en,
When flow'r-reviving rains are past ;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her forehead's like the show'ry bow,
When gleaming sunbeams intervene
And gild the distant mountain's brow ;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her cheeks are like yon crimson gem,
The pride of all the flowery scene,
Just opening on its thorny stem ;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her bosom's like the nightly snow,
When pale the morning rises keen ;
While hid the murm'ring streamlets flow ;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her lips are like yon cherries ripe,
That sunny walls from Boreas screen ;
They tempt the taste and charm the sight ;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her teeth are like a flock of sheep,
With fleeces newly washen clean ;
That slowly mount the rising steep ;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her breath is like the fragrant breeze,
 That gently stirs the blossom'd bean ;
 When Phoebus sinks behind the seas ;
 An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her voice is like the ev'ning thrush,
 That sings on Cessnock banks unseen ;
 While his mate sits nestling in the bush ;
 An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

But it's not her air, her form, her face,
 Tho' matching beauty's fabled queen ;
 'Tis the mind that shines in ev'ry grace.
 An' chiefly in her rogueish een.

BONIE PEGGY ALISON.¹⁰

Tune—"The Braes o' Balquhiddie."

Chorus.—And I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
 And I'll kiss thee o'er again ;
 And I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
 My bonie Peggy Alison.

Ilk care and fear, when thou art near
 I ever mair defy them, O !
 Young kings upon their hansel throne
 Are no sae blest as I am, O !
 And I'll kiss thee yet, yet, etc.

When in my arms, wi' a' thy charms,
 I clasp my countless treasure, O !
 I seek nae mair o' Heav'n to share
 Than sic a moment's pleasure, O !
 And I'll kiss thee yet, yet, etc.

And by thy een sae bonie blue,
 I swear I'm thine for ever, O !
 And on thy lips I seal my vow,
 And break it shall I never, O !
 And I'll kiss thee yet, yet, etc.

MARY MORISON.¹¹

O MARY, at thy window be,
 It is the wish'd, the trysted hour !
 Those smiles and glances let me see,
 That make the miser's treasure poor :
 How blythely wad I bide the stoure,
 A weary slave frae sun to sun,
 Could I the rich reward secure,
 The lovely Mary Morison.

Yestreen, when to the trembling string
 The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
 To thee my fancy took its wing,
 I sat, but neither heard nor saw .
 Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
 And yon the toast of a' the town,
 I sigh'd, and said among them a',
 "Ye are na' Mary Morison."

Oh, Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
 Wha for thy sake wad gladly die ?
 Or canst thou break that heart of his,
 Whase only faut is loving thee ?
 If love for love thou wilt na gie,
 At least be pity to me shown ;
 A thought ungentle canna be
 The thought o' Mary Morison.

WINTER: A DIRGE.¹²

THE wintry west extends his blast,
 And hail and rain does blaw ;
 Or, the stormy north sends driving forth
 The blinding sleet and snaw :
 While, tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
 And roars frae bank to brae ;
 And bird and beast in covert rest,
 And pass the heartless day.

"The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast,"
The joyless winter day
Let others fear, to me more dear
Than all the pride of May:
The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,
My griefs it seems to join;
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fate resembles mine!

Thou Power Supreme whose mighty scheme
These woes of mine fulfil,
Here, firm I rest; they must be best,
Because they are *Thy* will!
Then all I want—O do Thou grant
This one request of mine!—
Since to *enjoy* Thou dost deny,
Assist me to *resign*.

A PRAYER UNDER THE PRESSURE OF VIOLENT ANGUISH.

O THOU Great Being! what Thou are,
Surpasses me to know;
Yet sure I am, that known to Thee
Are all Thy works below.

Thy creature here before Thee stands,
All wretched and distress;
Yet sure those ills that wring my soul
Obey Thy high behest.

Sure Thou, Almighty, canst not act
From cruelty or wrath!
O, free my weary eyes from tears,
Or close them fast in death!

But, if I must afflicted be,
To suit some wise design;
Then man my soul with firm resolves,
To bear and not repine!

PARAPHRASE OF THE FIRST PSALM.

THE man, in life wherever plac'd,
Hath happiness in store,
Who walks not in the wicked's way,
Nor learns their guilty lore!

Nor from the seat of scornful pride
Casts forth his eyes abroad,
But with humility and awe
Still walks before his God.

That man shall flourish like the trees,
Which by the streamlets grow ;
The fruitful top is spread on high,
And firm the root below.

But he whose blossom buds in guilt
Shall to the ground be cast,
And, like the rootless stubble, tost
Before the sweeping blast.

For why? that God the good adore,
Hath giv'n them peace and rest,
But hath decreed that wicked men
Shall ne'er be truly blest.

THE FIRST SIX VERSES OF THE NINETIETH
PSALM VERSIFIED.

O THOU, at first, the greatest friend
Of all the human race!
Whose strong right hand has ever been
Their stay and dwelling place!

Before the mountains heav'd their heads
Beneath Thy forming hand,
Before this ponderous globe itself,
Arose at Thy command ;

That Pow'r which rais'd and still upholds
This universal frame,
From countless, unbeginning time
Was ever still the same.

Those mighty periods of years
Which seems to us so vast,
Appear no more before Thy sight
Than yesterday that's past.

Thou giv'st the word: Thy creature, man,
Is to existence brought;
Again Thou say'st, "Ye sons of men,
Return ye into nought!"

Thou layest them, with all their cares,
In everlasting sleep;
As with a flood Thou tak'st them off
With overwhelming sweep.

They flourish like the morning flow'r,
In beauty's pride array'd;
But long ere night—cut down, it lies
All wither'd and decay'd.

A PRAYER IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

O THOU unknown, Almighty Cause
Of all my hope and fear!
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
Perhaps I must appear!

If I have wander'd in those paths
Of life I ought to shun—
As something, loudly, in my breast,
Remonstrates I have done—

Thou know'st that Thou hast formed me
With passions wild and strong;
And list'ning to their witching voice
Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has come short,
 Or frailty stept aside,
 Do Thou, All-Good—for such Thou art—
 In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have err'd,
 No other plea I have,
 But, Thou art good ; and Goodness still
 Delighteth to forgive

STANZAS, ON THE SAME OCCASION.

WHY am I loth to leave this earthly scene ?
 Have I so found it full of pleasing charms—
 Some drops of joy with draughts of ill between—
 Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewing storms ?
 Is it departing pangs my soul alarms ?
 Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode ?
 For guilt, for guilt, my terrors are in arms :
 I tremble to approach an angry God,
 And justly smart beneath His sin-avenging rod.
 Fain would I say, "Forgive my foul offence!"
 Fain promise never more to disobey ;
 But, should my Author health again dispense,
 Again I might desert fair virtue's way ;
 Again in folly's path might go astray ,
 Again exalt the brute and sink the man ;
 Then how should I for heavenly mercy pray,
 Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan ?
 Who sin so oft have mourn'd, yet to temptation ran ?
 O Thou great Governor of all below !
 If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee,
 Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
 Or still the tumult of the raging sea :
 With that controlling pow'r assist ev'n me,
 Those headlong furious passions to confine,
 For all unfit I feel my pow'rs to be,
 To rule their torrent in th' allow'd line ;
 O, aid me with Thy help, Omnipotence Divine !

FICKLE FORTUNE.¹³

THOUGH fickle Fortune has deceived me,
 She promis'd fair and perform'd but ill ;
 Of mistress, friends, and wealth bereav'd me,
 Yet I bear a heart shall support me still.—

I'll act with prudence as far as I'm able,
 But if success I must never find,
 Then come misfortune, I bid thee welcome,
 I'll meet thee with an undaunted mind.

RAGING FORTUNE.

O RAGING Fortune's withering blast
 Has laid my leaf full low !
 O raging Fortune's withering blast
 Has laid my leaf full low !

My stem was fair, my bud was green,
 My blossom sweet did blow ;
 The dew fell fresh, the sun rose mild,
 And made my branches grow ;

But luckless Fortune's northern storms
 Laid a' my blossoms low,—
 But luckless Fortune's northern storms
 Laid a' my blossoms low !

I'LL GO AND BE A SODGER.

O WHY the deuce should I repine,
 And be an ill foreboder ?
 I'm twenty-three, and five feet nine,
 I'll go and be a sodger !

I gat some gear wi' mickle care,
 I held it weel thegither ;
 But now it's gane, and something mair—
 I'll go an be a sodger !

NO CHURCHMAN AM I.¹⁴

Tune — “Prepare, my dear Brethren.”

No churchman am I for to rail and to write,
No statesman nor soldier to plot or to fight,
No sly man of business contriving a snare,
For a big-belly'd bottle's the whole of my care.

The peer I don't envy, I give him his bow ;
I scorn not the peasant, tho' ever so low ;
But a club of good fellows, like those that are here,
And a bottle like this, are my glory and care.

Here passes the squire on his brother—his horse ;
There centum per centum, the cit with his purse ;
But see you the *Crown* how it waves in the air ?
There a big-belly'd bottle still eases my care.

The wife of my bosom, alas ! she did die ;
For sweet consolation to church I did fly ;
I found that old Solomon provèd it fair,
That a big-belly'd bottle's a cure for all care.

I once was persuaded a venture to make ;
A letter inform'd me that all was to wreck ;
But the pursy old landlord just waddl'd upstairs,
With a glorious bottle that ended my cares.

“Life's cares they are comforts”—a maxim laid down
By the Bard, what d'ye call him ? that wore the black gown ;
And faith I agree with th' old prig to a hair ;
For a big-belly'd bottle's a heav'n of a care.

A STANZA ADDED IN A MASON LODGE.

Then fill up a bumper and make it o'erflow,
And honours masonic prepare for to throw ;
May ev'ry true Brother of the Compass and Square
Have a big-belly'd bottle when harass'd with care.

MY FATHER WAS A FARMER.¹⁵*Tune*—"The Weaver and his Shuttle, O."

My father was a farmer upon the Carrick border,
And carefully he bred me in decency and order ;
He bade me act a manly part, though I had ne'er a farthing ;
For without an honest manly heart, no man was worth regarding.

Then out into the world my course I did determine ;
Tho' to be rich was not my wish, yet to be great was charming :
My talents they were not the worst, nor yet my education :
Resolv'd was I, at least to try, to mend my situation.

In many a way, and vain essay, I courted Fortune's favour ;
Some cause unseen still stept between, to frustrate each endeavour ;
Sometimes by foes I was o'erpower'd, sometimes by friends forsaken ;

And when my hope was at the top, I still was worst mistaken.

Then sore harass'd, and tir'd at last, with Fortune's vain delusion,
I dropt my schemes, like idle dreams, and came to this conclusion :
The past was bad, and the future hid, its good or ill untrièd ;
But the present hour was in my pow'r, and so I would enjoy it.

No help, nor hope, nor view had I, nor person to befriend me ;
So I must toil, and sweat, and moil, and labour to sustain me ;
To plough and sow, to reap and mow, my father bred me early ,
For one, he said, to labour bred, was a match for Fortune fairly.

Thus all obscure, unknown, and poor, thro' life I'm doom'd to wander,

Till down my weary bones I lay in everlasting slumber ;
No view nor care, but shun whate'er might breed me pain or sorrow ;

I live to-day as well's I may, regardless of to-morrow.

But cheerful still, I am as well as a monarch in his palace,
Tho' Fortune's frown still hunts me down, with all her wonted malice :

I make indeed my daily bread, but ne'er can make it farther :
But as daily bread is all I need, I do not much regard her.

When sometimes by my labour, I earn a little money,
Some unforeseen misfortune comes gen'rally upon me ;
Mischance, mistake, or by neglect, or my good-natur'd folly :
But come what will, I've sworn it still, I'll ne'er be melancholy.

All you who follow wealth and power with unremitting ardour,
The more in this you look for bliss, you leave your view the farther :
Had you the wealth Potosi boasts, or nations to adore you,
A cheerful honest-hearted clown I will prefer before you.

JOHN BARLEYCORN: A BALLAD.¹⁶

THERE was three kings into the east,
Three kings both great and high,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.

They took a plough and plough'd him down,
Put clods upon his head,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn was dead.

But the cheerful Spring came kindly on,
And show'rs began to fall ;
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surpris'd them all.

The sultry suns of Summer came,
And he grew thick and strong ;
His head weel arm'd wi' pointed spears,
That no one should him wrong

The sober Autumn enter'd mild,
When he grew wan and pale ;
His bending joints and drooping head
Show'd he began to fail.

His colour sicken'd more and more,
He faded into age ;
And then his enemies began
To show their deadly rage.

They've taen a weapon, long and sharp,
And cut him by the knee ;
Then ty'd him fast upon a cart,
Like a rogue for forgerie.
They laid him down upon his back,
And cudgell'd him full sore ;
They hung him ap before the storm,
And turn'd him o'er and o'er.
They fillèd up a darksome pit
With water to the brim,
They heav'd in John Barleycorn—
There, let him sink or swim.
They laid him out upon the floor,
To work him farther woe ;
And still, as signs of life appear'd,
They toss'd him to and fro.
They wasted, o'er a scorching flame,
The marrow of his bones ;
But a miller us'd him worst of all,
For he crush'd him between two stones
And they hae taen his very heart's blood,
And drank it round and round ;
And still the more and more they drank,
Their joy did more abound.
John Barleycorn was a hero bold,
Of noble enterprise ;
For if you do but taste his blood,
'Twill make your courage rise.
'Twill make a man forget his woe ;
'Twill heighten all his joy :
'Twill make the widow's heart to sing,
Tho' the tear were in her eye.
Then let us toast John Barleycorn,
Each man a glass in hand ;
And may his great posterity
Ne'er fail in old Scotland!

THE DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF POOR MAILIE.¹⁷

THE AUTHOR'S ONLY PET YOWE,—AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE.

As Mailie, an' her lambs thegi'ther,
 Was ae day nibblin on the tether,
 Upon her cloot she coost a hitch,
 An' owre she warsl'd in the ditch:
 There, groanin, dying, she did lie,
 When *Hughoc* he cam doytin by.

Wi' glowrin een, and lifted han's
 Poor *Hughoc* like a statue stan's;
 He saw her days were near-hand ended,
 But, wae's my heart! he could na mend it!
 He gapèd wide, but naething spak;
 At length poor Mailie silence brak.

"O thou, whase lamentable face
 Appears to mourn my woefu' case!
 My dying words attentive hear,
 An' bear them to my Master dear.

"Tell him, if e'er again he keep
 As muckle gear as buy a sheep—
 O, bid him never tie them mair,
 Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair!
 But ca' them out to park or hill,
 An' let them wander at their will:
 So may his flock increase, an' grow
 To scores o' lambs, and packs o' woo'!

"Tell him, he was a Master kin',
 An' ay was guid to me an' mine;
 An' now my dying charge I gie him,
 My helpless lambs, I trust them wi' him.

"O, bid him save their harmless lives,
 Frae dogs, an' tods, an' butchers' knives!
 But gie them guid cow-milk their fill,
 Till they be fit to fend themsel;
 An' tent them duly, e'en an' morn,
 Wi' taets o' hay an' rippis o' corn.

"An' may they never learn the gaets,
 Of ither vile, wanrestfu' pets—
 To slink thro' slaps, an' reave an' steal,
 At stacks o' pease, or stocks o' kail!
 So may they, like their great forbears,
 For monie a year come thro' the sheers :
 So wives will gie them bits o' bread,
 An' bairns greet for them when they're dead.

"My poor toop-lamb, my son an' heir,
 O, bid him breed him up wi' care!
 An' if he live to be a beast,
 To pit some havins in his breast!

"An' warn him—what I winna name
 To stay content wi' yowes at hame ;
 An' no to rin an' wear his cloots,
 Like ither menseless, graceless brutes.

"An' niest, my yowie, silly thing,
 Gude keep thee frae a tether string!
 O, may thou ne'er forgather up,
 Wi' ony blastit, moorland toop ;
 But ay keep mind to moop an' mell,
 Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel!

"And now, my bairns, wi' my last breath,
 I lea'e my blessing wi' you baith :
 An' when you think upo' your mither,
 Mind to be kind to ane anither.

"Now, honest *Hughoc*, dinna fail,
 To tell my master a' my tale ;
 An' bid him burn this cursed tether,
 An' for thy pains thou'se get my blather."

This said, poor Mailie turn'd her head,
 An' clos'd her een amang the dead!

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY.¹⁸

LAMENT in rhyme, lament in prose,
 Wi' saut tears trickling down your nose ;
 Our bardie's fate is at a close,

Past a' remead!

The last, sad cape-stane o' his woe's
 Poor Mailie's dead!

It's no the loss o' warl's gear,
 That could sae bitter draw the tear,
 Or mak our bardie, dowie, wear

The mournin weed:

He's lost a friend an' neebor dear,

In Mailie dead.

Thro' a' the town she trotted by him ;
 A lang half-mile she could descry him ;
 Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
 She ran wi' speed:
 A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him,
 Than Mailie dead.

I wat she was a sheep o' sense,
 An' could behave hersel wi' mense :
 I'll say't she never brak a fence,

Thro' thievish greed.

Our bardie, lanely, keeps the spence

Sin' Mailie's dead.

Or, if he wanders up the howe,
 Her livin image in her yowe
 Comes bleatin till him, owre the knowe,
 For bits o' bread ;

An' down the briny pearls rowe

For Mailie dead.

She was nae get o' moorland tips,
 Wi' tauted ket, an' hairy hips ;
 For her forbears were brought in ships,
 Frae 'yon the Tweed :
 A bonier flesh ne'er cross'd the clips
 Than Mailie's—dead.

I lock'd her in my fond embrace ;
Her heart was beating rarely :
My blessings on that happy place,
Amang the rigs o' barley !
But by the moon and stars so bright,
That shone that hour so clearly !
She ay shall bless that happy night
Amang the rigs o' barley.
Corn rigs, an' barley rigs, etc.

I hae been blythe wi' comrades dear ;
I hae been merry drinking ;
I hae been joyfu' gath'rin gear ;
I hae been happy thinking :
But a' the pleasures e'er I saw,
Tho' three times doubl'd fairly—
That happy night was worth them a',
Amang the rigs o' barley.
Corn rigs, an' barley rigs, etc.

NOW WESTLIN WINDS.²⁰

NOW westlin winds and slaught'ring guns
Bring Autumn's pleasant weather ;
The moorcock springs on whirring wings,
Amang the blooming heather :
Now waving grain, wide o'er the plain,
Delights the weary farmer ;
And the moon shines bright, when I rove at night,
To muse upon my charmer.
The partridge loves the fruitful fells,
The plover loves the mountains ;
The woodcock haunts the lonely dells,
The soaring hern the fountains :
Thro' lofty groves the cushat roves,
The path of man to shun it,
The hazel bush o'erhangs the thrush,
The spreading thorn the linnet.

Thus ev'ry kind their pleasure find,
 The savage and the tender ;
 Some social join, and leagues combine,
 Some solitary wander :
 Avaunt, away, the cruel sway!
 Tyrannic man's dominion ;
 The sportsman's joy, the · · · · · cry,
 The flutt'ring, gory pinion!

But, Peggy dear, the ev'ning's clear,
 Thick flies the skimming swallow ;
 The sky is blue, the fields in view,
 All fading-green and yellow :
 Come let us stray our gladsome way,
 And view the charms of Nature ;
 The rustling corn, the fruited thorn,
 And ev'ry happy creature.

We'll gently walk, and sweetly talk,
 Till the silent moon shine clearly ;
 I'll grasp thy waist, and, fondly prest,
 Swear how I love thee dearly :
 Not vernal show'rs to budding flow'rs,
 Not Autumn to the farmer,
 So dear can be as thou to me,
 My fair, my lovely charmer!

MY NANIE, O.²¹

BEHIND yon hills where Lugar flows,
 'Mang moors an' mosses many, O,
 The wintry sun the day has clos'd,
 And I'll awa to Nanie, O.

The westlin wind blows loud an' shrill ;
 The night's baith mirk and rainy, O ;
 But I'll get my plaid an' out I'll steal,
 An' owre the hill to Nanie, O.



BU

"Thé wintry sun the day has clos'd,
And I'll awa to Nanie, O."

My Nanie's charming, sweet, an' young ;
 Nae artfu' wiles to win ye, O :
 May ill befa' the flattering tongue
 That wad beguile my Nanie, O.

Her face is fair, her heart is true ;
 As spotless as she's bonie, O ;
 The op'ning gowan, wat wi' dew,
 Nae purer is than Nanie, O.

A country lad is my degree,
 An' few there be that ken me, O ;
 But what care I how few they be,
 I'm welcome ay to Nanie, O.

My riches a's my penny-fee,
 An' I maun guide it cannie, O ;
 But warl's gear ne'er troubles me,
 My thoughts are a'—my Nanie, O.

Our auld guidman delights to view
 His sheep an' kye thrive bonie, O ,
 But I'm as blythe that hauds his pleugh,
 An' has nae care but Nanie, O.

Come weel, come woe, I care na by ;
 I'll tak what Heav'n will sen' me, O :
 Nae ither care in life have I,
 But live, an' love my Nanie, O.

GREEN GROW THE RASHES.²²

Chorus.—Green grow the rashes, O ;
 Green grow the rashes, O ;
 The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
 Are spent among the lasses, O

THERE'S nought but care on ev'ry han',
 In every hour that passes, O :
 What signifies the life o' man,
 An' 'twere na for the lasses, O :
 Green grow, etc.

The war'ly race may riches chase,
 An' riches still may fly them, O ;
 An' tho' at last they catch them fast,
 Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O.
 Green grow, etc.

But gie me a cannie hour at e'en,
 My arms about my dearie, O ;
 An' war'ly cares, an' war'ly men,
 May a' gae tapsalteerie, O !
 Green grow, etc.

For you sae douce, ye sneer at this ;
 Ye're nought but senseless asses, O :
 The wisest man the warl' e'er saw,
 He dearly lov'd the lasses, O.
 Green grow, etc.

Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears
 Her noblest work she classes, O :
 Her prentice han' she try'd on man,
 An' then she made the lasses, O.
 Green grow, etc.

“INDEED WILL I,” QUO’ FINDLAY.²³

Tune—“Lass, an I come near thee.”

“WHA is that at my bower-door?”

‘O wha is it but Findlay!’

“Then gae your gate, ye’s nae be here :”

‘Indeed maun I,’ quo’ Findlay.

“What make ye, sae like a thief?”

‘O come and see,’ quo’ Findlay ;

“Before the morn ye’ll work mischief.”—

‘Indeed will I,’ quo’ Findlay.

“Gif I rise and let you in”—

‘Let me in,’ quo’ Findlay,

“Ye’ll keep me waukin wi’ your din”—

‘Indeed will I,’ quo’ Findlay.

“In my bower if you should stay”—
‘Let me stay,’ quo’ Findlay;
“I fear ye’ll bide till break o’ day”—
‘Indeed will I,’ quo’ Findlay.
“Here this night if ye remain”—
‘I’ll remain,’ quo’ Findlay;
“I dread ye’ll learn the gait again”—
‘Indeed will I,’ quo’ Findlay.
“What may pass within this bower”—
‘Let it pass,’ quo’ Findlay;
“Ye maun conceal till your last hour”—
‘Indeed will I,’ quo’ Findlay.

REMORSE—A FRAGMENT.

OF all the numerous ills that hurt our peace—
That press the soul, or wring the mind with anguish,
Beyond comparison the worst are those
By our own folly, or our guilt brought on.
In ev’ry other circumstance, the mind
Has this to say, ‘it was no deed of mine:’
But, when to all the evil of misfortune
This sting is added, ‘blame thy foolish self!’
Or worser far, the pangs of keen remorse,
The torturing, gnawing consciousness of guilt—
Of guilt, perhaps, where we’ve involvèd others,
The young, the innocent, who fondly lov’d us;
Nay more, that very love their cause of ruin!
O burning hell! in all thy store of torments
There’s not a keener lash!
Lives there a man so firm, who, while his heart
Feels all the bitter horrors of his crime,
Can reason down its agonizing throbs;
And, after proper purpose of amendment,
Can firmly force his jarring thoughts to peace?
O happy, happy, enviable man!
O glorious magnanimity of soul!

EPITAPH ON JAMES GRIEVE, LAIRD OF BOGHEAD
TARBOLTON.

HERE lies Boghead amang the dead,
In hopes to get salvation;
But if such as he in Heav'n may be,
Then welcome—hail! damnation.

EPITAPH ON A CELEBRATED RULING ELDER.²⁴

HERE Souter Hood in death does sleep;
To hell if he's gane thither,
Satan, gie him thy gear to keep;
He'll haud it weel thegither.

EPITAPH ON MY OWN FRIEND AND MY FATHER'S
FRIEND, WM. MUIR IN TARBOLTON MILL.

AN honest man here lies at rest,
As e'er God with his image blest;
The friend of man, the friend of truth,
The friend of age, and guide of youth:
Few hearts like his—with virtue warm'd,
Few heads with knowledge so informed:
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;
If there is none, he made the best of this.

EPITAPH ON MY EVER HONOURED FATHER.²⁵

O YE whose cheek the tear of pity stains,
Draw near with pious rev'rence, and attend!
Here lie the loving husband's dear remains,
The tender father, and the gen'rous friend;
The pitying heart that felt for human woe,
The dauntless heart that fear'd no human pride;
The friend of man—to vice alone a foe;
For "ev'n his failings lean'd to virtue's side."

BALLAD ON THE AMERICAN WAR.²⁶

Tune—"Killiecrankie."

WHEN Guildford good our pilot stood,
An' did our hellim thrav, man;
Ae night, at tea, began a plea,
Within America, man:
Then up they gat the maskin-pat,
And in the sea did jaw, man;
An' did nae less, in full congress,
Than quite refuse our law, man.

Then thro' the lakes Montgomery takes,
I wat he was na slaw, man;
Down Lowrie's Burn he took a turn,
And Carleton did ca', man:
But yet, whatreck, he, at Quebec,
Montgomery-like did fa', man,
Wi' sword in hand, before his band,
Amang his en'mies a', man.

Poor Tammy Gage within a cage
Was kept at Boston-ha', man;
Till Willie Howe took o'er the knowe
For Philadelphia, man;
Wi' sword an' gun he thought a sin
Guid Christian blud to draw, man,
But at New-York, wi' knife an' fork,
Sir-Loin he hackèd sma', man.

Burgoyne gaed up, like spur an' whip.
Till Fraser brave did fa', man;
Then lost his way, ae misty day,
In Saratoga shaw, man.
Cornwallis fought as lang's he dought,
An' did the buckskin's claw, man,
But Clinton's glaive frae rust toⁿ save,
He hung it to the wa', man.

Then Montague, an' Guildford too,
 Began to fear a fa', man ;
 And Sackville dour, wha stood the stoure,
 The German chief to thraw, man :
 For Paddy Burke, like ony Turk,
 Nae mercy had at a', man ;
 An' Charlie Fox threw by the box,
 An' lows'd his tinkler jaw, man.

Then Rockingham took up the game ;
 Till death did on him ca', man ;
 When Shelburne meek held up his cheek,
 Conform to gospel law, man :
 Saint Stephen's boys, wi' jarring noise,
 They did his measures thraw, man ;
 For North an' Fox united stocks,
 An' bore him to the wa', man.

Then clubs an' hearts were Charlie's cartes,
 He swept the stakes awa', man,
 Till the diamond's ace, of Indian race,
 Led him a sair *faux pas*, man :
 The Saxon lads, wi' loud placads,
 On Chatham's boy did ca', man ;
 An' Scotland drew her pipe an' blew,
 "Up, Willie, waur them a', man!"

Behind the throne then Granville's gone,
 A secret word or twa, man ;
 While sleet Dundas arous'd the class
 Be-north the Roman wa', man :
 An' Chatham's wraith, in heav'nly graith,
 (Inspired bardies saw, man),
 Wi' kindling eyes, cry'd, "Willie, rise!
 Would I hae fear'd them a', man?"

But, word an' blow, North, Fox, and Co.
 Gowff'd Willie like a ba', man ;
 Till Suthron raise, an' coost their claise
 Behind him in a raw, man :

An' Caledon threw by the drone,
 An' did her whittle draw, man;
 An' swoor fu' rude, thro' dirt an' bluid,
 To mak it guid in law, man.

REPLY TO AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY
 JOHN RANKINE.²⁷

I AM a keeper of the law
 In some sma' points, altho' not a';
 Some people tell me gin I fa',
 Ae way or ither,
 The breaking of ae point, tho' sma'
 Breaks a' thegither.

I hae been in for't ance or twice,
 And winna say o'er far for thrice;
 Yet never met wi' that surprise
 That broke my rest;
 But now a rumour's like to rise—
 A whaup's i' the nest!

EPISTLE TO JOHN RANKINE.

ENCLOSING SOME POEMS.

O ROUGH, rude, ready-witted Rankine,
 The wale o' cocks for fun an' drinking!
 There's mony godly folks are thinking,
 Your dreams and tricks
 Will send you Korah-like a-sinkin,
 Straught to auld Nick's.

Ye hae sae mony cracks an' cants,
 And in your wicked, drucken rants,
 Ye mak a devil o' the saunts,
 An' fill them fou;
 And then their failings, flaws, an' wants,
 Are a' seen thro'.

Hipocrisy, in mercy spare it!
That holy robe, O dinna tear it!
Spare't for their sakes, wha aften wear it—
The lads in black;
But your curst wit, when it comes near it,
Rives't aff their back.

Think, wicked Sinner, wha ye're skaithing:
It's just the 'Blue-gown' badge an' claithing
O' saunts; tak that, ye lea'e them naething
To ken them by,
Frae ony unregenerate heathen,
Like you or I.

I've sent you here some rhymin ware,
A' that I bargain'd for, an' mair;
Sae, when ye hae an hour to spare,
I will expect,
Yon sang ye'll sen't, wi' cannie care,
And no neglect.

Tho' faith, sma' heart hae I to sing!
My muse dow scarcely spread her wing;
I've play'd mysel a bonie spring,
An' danc'd my fill!
I'd better gaen an' sair't the king,
At Bunker's Hill.

'Twas ae night lately, in my fun,
I gaed a rovin wi' the gun,
An' brought a pairrick to the grun'—
A bonie hen;
And, as the twilight was begun,
Thought nane wad ken.

The poor, wee thing was little hurt;
I straiKET it a wee for sport,
Ne'er thinking they wad fash me for't;
But Deil-ma-care!
Somebody tells the poacher-court,
The hale affair.

Some auld, us'd hands had taen a note,
 That sic a hen had got a shot;
 I was suspected for the plot;
 I scorn'd to lie;
 So gat the whistle o' my groat,
 An' pay't the fee.

It pits me ay as mad's a hare;
 So I can rhyme nor write nae mair;
 But pennyworths again is fair,
 When time's expedient:
 Meanwhile I am, respected Sir,
 Your most obedient.

A POET'S WELCOME TO HIS LOVE-BEGOTTEN DAUGHTER.²⁸

THOU'S welcome, wean; mishanter fa' me,
 If thoughts o' thee, or yet thy mamie,
 Shalt ever daunt me or awe me,
 My bonie lady,
 Or if I blush when thou shalt ca' me
 Tyta or daddie.

Tho' now they ca' me fornicator,
 An' tease my name in kintry clatter,
 The mair they talk, I'm kent the better,
 E'en let them clash;
 An auld wife's tongue's a feckless matter
 To gie ane fash.

Welcome! my bonie, sweet, wee dochter,
 Tho' ye come here a wee unsought for,
 And tho' your comin' I hae fought for,
 Baith kirk and quier;
 Yet, by my faith, ye're no unwrought for,
 That I shall swear!

Wee image o' my bonie Betty,
 As fatherly I kiss and daut thee,
 As dear, and near my heart I set thee
 Wi' as gude will
 As a' the priests had seen me get thee
 That's out o' h—ll.

 Sweet fruit o' mony a merry dint,
 My funny toil is now a' tint,
 Sin' thou cam to the warl' asklent,
 Which fools may scoff at;
 In my last plack thy part's be in't
 The better ha'f o't.

 Tho' I should be the waur bestead,
 Thou's be as braw and bienly clad,
 And thy young years as nicely bred
 Wi' education,
 As ony brat o' wedlock's bed,
 In a' thy station.

 Lord grant that thou may ay inherit
 Thy mither's person, grace, an' merit,
 An' thy poor, worthless daddy's spirit,
 Without his failins,
 'Twill please me mair to see thee heir it,
 Than stocket mailens.

 For if thou be what I wad hae thee,
 And tak the counsel I shall gie thee,
 I'll never rue my trouble wi' thee—
 The cost nor shame o't,
 But be a loving father to thee,
 And brag the name o't.

O LEAVE NOVELS.

O LEAVE novels, ye Mauchline belles,
 Ye're safer at your spinning-wheel;
 Such witching books are baited hooks
 For rakish rooks like Rob Mossziel;

Your fine Tom Jones and Grandisons,
 They make your youthful fancies reel ;
 They heat your brains, and fire your veins,
 And then you're prey for Rob Moss-giel.

Beware a tongue that's smoothly hung,
 A heart that warmly seems to feel ;
 That feeling heart but acts a part—
 'Tis rakish art in Rob Moss-giel.
 The frank address, the soft caress,
 Are worse than poisoned darts of steel ;
 The frank address, and politesse,
 Are all finesse in Rob Moss-giel.

THE MAUCHLINE LADY.²⁹

WHEN first I came to Stewart Kyle,
 My mind it was na steady ;
 Where'er I gaed, where'er I rade,
 A mistress still I had ay :

But when I came roun' by Mauchline toun,
 Not dreading anybody,
 My heart was caught, before I thought,
 And by a Mauchline lady.

MY GIRL SHE'S AIRY.

Tune—"Black Jock."

My girl she's airy, she's buxom and gay ;
 Her breath is as sweet as the blossoms in May ;
 A touch of her lips it ravishes quite :
 She's always good natur'd, good humour'd, and free ;
 She dances, she glances, she smiles upon me ;
 I never am happy when out of her sight.

THE BELLES OF MAUCHLINE.³⁰

IN Mauchline there dwells six ~~proper~~ young belles,
 The pride of the place and its neighbourhood a' :
 Their carriage and dress, a stranger would guess,
 In London or Paris, they'd gotten it a'.

Miss Miller is fine, Miss Markland's divine,
 Miss Smith she has wit, and Miss Betty is brow :
 There's beauty and fortune to get wi' Miss Morton,
 But Armour's the jewel for me o' them a'.

EPITAPH ON A NOISY POLEMIC.^{30a}

BELOW thir stanes lie Jamie's banes ;
 O Death, it's my opinion,
 Thou ne'er took such a bleth'rin b-tch
 Into thy dark dominion!

EPITAPH ON A HENPECKED SQUIRE.

As father Adam first was fool'd
 (A case that's still too common),
 Here lies a man a woman ruled—
 The devil ruled the woman.

EPIGRAM ON SAID OCCASION.

O DEATH, had'st thou but spar'd his life,
 Whom we this day lament!
 We freely wad exchanged the wife,
 And a' been weel content.
 Ev'n as he is, cauld in his graff,
 The swap we yet will do't ;
 Tak thou the carlin's carcase aff,
 Thou'se get the saul o' boot.

ANOTHER.

ONE Queen Artemisa, as old stories tell,
 When deprived of her husband she lovèd so well,
 In respect for the love and affection he showed her,
 She reduc'd him to dust and she drank up the powder.
 But Queen Netherplace, of a diff'rent complexion,
 When called on to order the fun'ral direction,
 Would have ate her dead lord, on a slender pretence,
 Not to show her respect, but—to save the expence!

ON TAM THE CHAPMAN.

As Tam the chapman on a day,
 Wi' Death forgather'd by the way,
 Weel pleas'd, he greets a wight so famous,
 And Death was nae less pleas'd wi' Thomas,
 Wha cheerfully lays down his pack,
 And there blaws up a hearty crack :
 His social, friendly, honest heart
 Sae tickled Death, they could na part ;
 Sae, after viewing knives and garters,
 Death takes him hame to gie him quarters.

EPITAPH ON JOHN RANKINE.

AE day, as Death, that gruesome carl,
 Was driving to the tither warl'
 A mixtie-maxtie motley squad,
 And mony a guilt-bespotted lad—
 Black gowns of each denomination,
 And thieves of every rank and station,
 From him that wears the star and garter,
 To him that wintles in a halter :
 Ashamed himself to see the wretches,
 He mutters, glowrin at the bitches,
 "By G—d I'll not be seen behint them,
 Nor 'mang the sp'ritual core present them,

Without, at least, ae honest man,
 To grace this d—d infernal clan!"
 By Adamhull a glance he threw,
 "L—d God!" quoth he, "I have it now;
 There's just the man I want, i' faith!"
 And quickly stoppit Rankine's breath.

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN—A DIRGE.³¹

WHEN chill November's surly blast
 Made fields and forests bare,
 One ev'ning, as I wander'd forth
 Along the banks of Ayr,
 I spied a man, whose aged step
 Seem'd weary, worn with care;
 His face was furrow'd o'er with years,
 And hoary was his hair.

"Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou?"
 Began the rev'rend sage;
 "Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
 Or youthful pleasure's rage?
 Or haply, prest with cares and woes,
 Too soon thou hast began
 To wander forth, with me to mourn
 The miseries of man.

"The sun that overhangs yon moors,
 Out-spreading far and wide,
 Where hundreds labour to support
 A haughty lordling's pride;—
 I've seen yon weary winter-sun
 Twice forty times return;
 And ev'ry time has added proofs,
 That man was made to mourn.

"O man! while in thy early years,
 How prodigal of time!
 Mis-spending all thy precious hours—
 Thy glorious, youthful prime!

Alternate follies take the sway ;
Licentious passions burn ;
Which tenfold force gives Nature's law,
That man was made to mourn.

"Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhood's active might ;
Man then is useful to his kind,
Supported is his right :
But see him on the edge of life,
With cares and sorrows worn ;
Then Age and Want—oh ! ill-match'd pair—
Show man was made to mourn.

"A few seem favourites of fate,
In pleasure's lap carest ;
Yet, think not all the rich and great
Are likewise truly blest :
But oh ! what crowds in ev'ry land,
All wretched and forlorn,
Thro' weary life this lesson learn,
That man was made to mourn.

"Many and sharp the num'rous ills
Inwoven with our frame !
More pointed still we make ourselves,
Regret, remorse, and shame !
And man, whose heav'n-erected face
The smiles of love adorn,—
Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn !

"See yonder poor, o'er-labour'd wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil ,
And see his lordly fellow-worm
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, tho' a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

"If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave—
 By Nature's law design'd—
 Why was an independent wish
 E'er planted in my mind?
 If not, why am I subject to
 His cruelty, or scorn?
 Or why has man the will and pow'r
 To make his fellow mourn?

"Yet, let not this too much, my son,
 Disturb thy youthful breast:
 This partial view of human-kind
 Is surely not the best!
 The poor, oppressèd, honest man
 Had never, sure, been born,
 Had there not been some recompense
 To comfort those that mourn!

"O Death! the poor man's dearest friend,
 The kindest and the best!
 Welcome the hour my aged limbs
 Are laid with thee at rest!
 The great, the wealthy fear thy blow,
 From pomp and pleasure torn;
 But, oh! a blest relief for those
 That weary-laden mourn!"

THE TWA HERDS; OR, THE HOLY TULYIE.³² AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE.

"Blockheads with reason, wicked wits abhor,
 But fool with fool is barbarous civil war."—POPE.

O A' ye pious godly flocks,
 Weel fed on pastures orthodox,
 Wha now will keep you frae the fox,
 Or worrying tykes?
 Or wha will tent the waifs an' crocks,
 About the dykes?

The twa best herds in a' the wast,
That e'er ga'e gospel horn a blast
These five an' twenty simmers past—
Oh, dool to tell!

Hae had a bitter black out-cast
Atween themsel.

O, Moodie, man, an' wordy Russell,
How could you raise so vile a bustle;
Ye'll see how "new-light" herds will whistle,
An' think it fine!

The L—'s cause ne'er gat sic a twistle,
Sin' I hae min'.

O, Sirs! whae'er wad hae expeckit
Your duty ye wad sae negleckit,
Ye wha were ne'er by lairds respeckit
To wear the plaid,

But by the brutes themselves eleckit,
To be their guide

What flock wi' Moodie's flock could rank
Sae hale and hearty every shank,
Nae poison'd soor Arminian stank
He let them taste;

Frae Calvin's well, ay clear they drank,—
O, sic a feast!

The thummart, willcat, brock, an' tod,
Weel kend his voice thro' a' the wood,
He smell'd their ilka hole an' road,
Baith out an' in;

An' weel he lik'd to shed their bluid,
An' sell their skin.

What herd like Russell tell'd his tale;
His voice was heard thro' muir and dale,
He kenn'd the L—'s sheep, ilka tail,
Owre a' the height;

An' saw gin they were sick or hale,
At the first sight.

He fine a mangy sheep could scrub,
 Or nobly fling the gospel club,
 And "new-light" herds could nicely drub
 Or pay their skin;
 Could shake them o'er the burning dub,
 Or heave them in.

Sic twa—O! do I live to see't,
 Sic famous twa should disagree't,
 And names, like "villain," "hypocrite,"
 Ilk ither gi'en,
 While "new-light" herds, wi' laughin spite,
 Say neither's lien!

A' ye wha tent the gospel fauld,
 There's Duncan deep, an' Peebles shaul',
 But chiefly thou, apostle Auld,
 We trust in thee,
 That thou wilt work them, hot an' cauld,
 Till they agree.

Consider, sirs, how we're beset;
 There's scarce a new herd that we get,
 But comes frae 'mang that cursèd set,
 I winna name;
 I hope frae heav'n to see them yet
 In fiery flame.

Dalrymple has been lang our fae,
 M'Gill has wrought us meikle wae,
 An' that curs'd rascal ca'd M'Quhae,
 And baith the Shaws:
 That aft hae made us black an' blae,
 Wi' vengefu' paws.

Auld Wodrow lang has hatch'd mischief;
 We thought ay death wad bring relief,
 But he has gotten, to our grief,
 Ane to succeed him,
 A chield wha'll soundly buff our beef;
 I meikle dread him.

And mony a ane that I could tell,
 Wha fain would openly rebel,
 Forby turn-coats amang oursel,
 There's Smith for ane ;
 I doubt he's but a grey nick quill,
 An' that ye'll fin'.

O! a' ye flocks o'er a' the hills,
 By mosses, meadows, moors, and fells,
 Come, join your counsel and your skills
 To cove the lairds,
 An' get the brutes the power themsels
 To chuse their herds.

Then Orthodoxy yet may prance,
 An' Learning in a woody dance,
 An' that fell cur ca'd "common-sense,"
 That bites sae sair,
 Be banished o'er the sea to France :
 Let him bark there.

Then Shaw's an' Dalrymple's eloquence,
 M'Gill's close nervous excellence,
 M'Quhae's pathetic manly sense,
 An' guid M'Math,
 Wi' Smith, wha thro' the heart can glance,
 May a' pack aff.

EPISTLE TO DAVIE, A BROTHER POET.³³

JANUARY.

WHILE winds frae off Ben-Lomond blaw,
 An' bar the doors wi' drivin' snaw,
 An' hing us owre the ingle,
 I set me down to pass the time,
 An' spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,
 In hamely, westlin jingle :
 While frosty winds blaw in the drift,
 Ben to the chimla lug,

I grudge a wee the great-folk's gift,
That live sae bien an' snug :
I tent less, and want less
Their roomy fire-side ;
But hanker, and canker,
To see their cursed pride.
It's hardly in a body's pow'r,
To keep, at times, frae being sour,
To see how things are shar'd ;
How best o' chieels are whyles in want,
While coofs on countless thousands rant,
And ken na how to ware't ;
But, Davie, lad, ne'er fash your head,
Tho' we hae little gear ;
We're fit to win our daily bread,
As lang's we're hale and fier :
" Mair spier na, nor fear na,"
Auld age ne'er mind a feg ;
The last o't, the warst o't,
Is only but to beg.
To lye in kilns and barns at e'en,
When banes are craz'd, and bluid is thin,
Is, doubtless, great distress !
Yet then content could make us blest ;
Ev'n then, sometimes, we'd snatch a taste
Of truest happiness.
The honest heart that's free frae a'
Intended fraud or guile,
However Fortune kick the ba',
Has aye some cause to smile ;
An' mind still, you'll find still,
A comfort this nae sma' ;
Nae mair then, we'll care then,
Nae farther we can fa'.
What tho', like commoners of air,
We wander out, we know not where,
But either house or hal',

Yet nature's charms, the hills and woods,
The sweeping vales, and foaming floods,
Are free alike to all.

In days when daisies deck the ground,
And blackbirds whistle clear,
With honest joy our hearts will bound,
To see the coming year :

On braes when we please then,
We'll sit an' sowth a tune ;
Syne rhyme till't, we'll time till't
An' sing't when we hae done.

It's no in titles nor in rank ;
It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,
To purchase peace and rest :
It's no in makin muckle, mair ;
It's no in books, it's no in lear,
To make us truly blest :
If happiness hae not her seat
An' centre in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest ;
Nae treasures nor pleasures
Could make us happy lang ;
The heart ay's the part ay
That makes us right or wrang.

Think ye, that sic as you and I,
Wha drudge an' drive thro' wet and dry,
Wi' never ceasing toil ;
Think ye, are we less blest than they,
Wha scarcely tent us in their way,
As hardly worth their while ?
Alas ! how oft in haughty mood,
God's creatures they oppress !
Or else, neglecting a' that's good,^c
They riot in excess !

Barth careless and fearless
Of either heaven or hell ;
Esteeming, and deeming
It a' an idle tale !

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce,
Nor make our scanty pleasures less,
By pining at our state :
And, even should misfortunes come,
I, here wha sit, hae met wi' some—
An's thankfu' for them yet,
They gie the wit of age to youth ;
They let us ken oursel ;
They make us see the naked truth—
The real guid and ill :
Tho' losses an' crosses
Be lessons right severe,
There's wit there, ye'll get there,
Ye'll find nae other where.

But tent me, Davie, ace o' hearts !
(To say aught less wad wrang the cartes,
And flatt'ry I detest)
This life has joys for you and I ;
An' joys that riches ne'er could buy,
An' joys the very best.
There's a' the pleasures o' the heart,
The lover an' the frien' ;
Ye hae your Meg, your dearest part,
And I my darling Jean !
It warms me, it charms me,
To mention but her name :
It heats me, it beets me,
An' sets me a' on flame !

O all ye Pow'rs who rule above !
O Thou whose very self art love !
Thou know'st my words sincere !

The life-blood streaming thro' my heart,
 Or my more dear immortal part,
 Is not more fondly dear!
 When heart-corroding care and grief
 Deprive my soul of rest,
 Her dear idea brings relief,
 And solace to my breast.
 Thou Being, All-seeing,
 O hear my fervent pray'r;
 Still take her, and make her
 Thy most peculiar care!

All hail; ye tender feelings dear!
 The smile of love, the friendly tear,
 The sympathetic glow!
 Long since, this world's thorny ways
 Had number'd out my weary days,
 Had it not been for you!
 Fate still has blest me with a friend,
 In ev'ry care and ill;
 And oft a more endearing band—
 A tie more tender still.
 It lightens, it brightens
 The tenebrific scene,
 To meet with, an' greet with
 My Davie, or my Jean!

O, how that *Name* inspires my style!
 The words come skelpin, rank an' file,
 Amaist before I ken!
 The ready measure rins as fine,
 As Phœbus an' the famous Nine
 Were glowrin owre my pen.
 My spavet Pegasus will limp,
 Till ance he's fairly het;
 And then he'll hulch, and stilt, an' jimp,
 And rin an unco fit:

But least then the beast then
 Should rue this hasty ride,
 I'll light now, and dight now
 His sweaty, wizen'd hide.

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.³⁴

"And send the godly in a pet to pray."—POPE.

O THOU, who in the heavens does dwell,
 Who, as it pleases best Thyself,
 Sends ane to heaven, an' ten to hell,
 A' for thy glory,
 And no for ony gude or ill

They've done afore Thee!

I bless and praise Thy matchless might,
 When thousands Thou hast left in night,
 That I am here afore Thy sight,

For gifts an' grace

A burning and a shining light

To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
 That I should get sic exaltation,
 I wha deserve most just damnation

For broken laws,

Five thousand years ere my creation,

Thro' Adam's cause.

When frae my mither's womb I fell,
 Thou might hae plung'd me in hell,
 To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,

In burnin lakes,

Where damnèd devils roar and yell,

Chain'd to their stakes.

Yet I am here a chosen sample,
 To show Thy grace is great and ample ;
 I'm here a pillar o' Thy temple,

Strong as a rock,

A guide, a buckler, and example,

To a' Thy flock.

O L—d, Thou kens what zeal I bear,
 When drinkers drink, an' swearers swear,
 An' singin' there, an' dancin' here,
 Wi' great and sma';
 For I am keepit by Thy fear
 Free frae them a'.

But yet, O L—d! confess I must,
 At times I'm fashed wi' fleshy lust:
 An' sometimes, too, in warldly trust,
 Vile self gets in;
 But Thou remembers we are dust,
 Defil'd wi' sin.

O L—d! yestreen, Thou kens, wi' Meg—
 Thy pardon I sincerely beg,
 O! may't ne'er be a livin' plague
 To my dishonour,
 An' I'll ne'er lift a lawless leg
 Again upon her.

Besides, I farther maun allow,
 Wi' Leezie's lass three times I trow—
 But L—d, that Friday I was fou,
 When I cam near her;
 Or else, Thou kens, Thy servant true
 Wad never steer her.

Maybe Thou lets this fleshy thorn
 Buffet Thy servant e'en and morn,
 Lest he owre proud and high shou'd turn,
 That he's sae gifted:
 If sae, Thy han' maun e'en be borne,
 Until Thou lift it.

L—d, bless Thy chosen in this place,
 For here Thou hast a chosen race.
 But G—d confound their stubborn face,
 An' blast their name,*
 Wha bring Thy elders to disgrace
 An' public shame.

L—d, mind Gaw'n Hamilton's deserts ;
 He drinks, an' swears, an' plays at cartes,
 Yet has sae mony takin arts,
 Wi' great and sma',
 Frae G—d's ain priest the people's hearts
 He steals awa.

An' when we chasten'd him therefor,
 Thou kens how he bred sic a splore,
 An' set the warld in a roar
 O' laughing at us ;—
 Curse Thou his basket and his store,
 Kail an' potatoes.

L—d, hear my earnest cry and pray'r,
 Against that Presbyt'ry o' Ayr ;
 Thy strong right hand, L—d, make it bare
 Upo' their heads ;
 L—d visit them, an' dinna spare,
 For their misdeeds.

O L—d, my G—d! that glib-tongu'd Aiken,
 My vera heart and flesh are quakin,
 To think how we stood sweatin, shakin,
 An' p—'d wi' dread,
 While Auld, wi' hingin lip, gaed sneakin,
 And hid his head.

L—d, in Thy day o' vengeance try him,
 L—d, visit them wha did employ him,
 And pass not in Thy mercy by them,
 Nor hear their pray'r,
 But for Thy people's sake destroy them,
 An' dinna spare.

But, L—d, remember me an' mine
 Wi' mercies temporal an' divine,
 That I for grace an' gear may shine,
 Excell'd by nane,
 And a' the glory shall be Thine,
 Amen, Amen!

EPITAPH ON HOLY WILLIE.

HERE Holy Willie's sair worn clay

Taks up its last abode ;

His saul has ta'en some other way,

I fear, the left-hand road.

Stop! there he is, as sure's a gun,

Poor, silly body, see him ,

Nae wonder he's as black's the grun,

Observe wha's standing wi' him.

Your brunstane devilship, I see

Has got him there before ye ;

But haud your nine-tail cat a wee,

Till ance you've heard my story.

Your pity I will not implore,

For pity ye have nane ;

Justice, alas! has gi'en him o'er,

And mercy's day is gane.

But hear me, Sir, deil as ye are,

Look something to your credit ;

A coof like him wad stain your name,

If it were kent ye did it.

DEATH AND DOCTOR HORNBOOK.³⁵

A TRUE STORY.

SOME books are lies frae end to end,

And some great lies were never penn'd ;

Ev'n ministers they hae been kenn'd,

In holy rapture,

A rousing whid at times to vend,

And nail't wi' Scripture.

But this that I am gaun to tell,

Which lately on a night befel,

Is just as true's the Deil's in hell

Or Dublin city :

That e'er he nearer comes oursel

'S a muckle pity

The clachan yill had made me canty,
 I was na fou, but just had plenty ;
 I stacher'd whyles, but yet took tent ay
 To free the ditches ;
 An' hillocks, stanes, an' bushes, kenn'd ay
 Frae ghaists an' witches.

The rising moon began to glowre
 The distant *Cumnock* hills out-owre :
 To count her horns, wi' a' my pow'r,
 I set mysel ;
 But whether she had three or four,
 I cou'd na tell.

I was come round about the hill,
 An' toddlin down on *Willie's mill*,
 Setting my staff wi' a' my skill,
 To keep me sicker ;
 Tho' leeward whyles, against my will,
 I took a bicker.

I there wi' *Something* did forgather,
 That pat me in an eerie swither ;
 An' awfu' scythe, out-owre ae shouther,
 Clear-dangling, hang ;
 A three-tae'd leister on the ither
 Lay, large an' lang.

Its stature seem'd lang Scotch ells twa,
 The queerest shape that e'er I saw,
 For fient a wame it had ava ;
 And then its shanks,
 They were as thin, as sharp an' sma'
 As cheeks o' branks.

' Guid-een', quo' I ; ' Friend ! hae ye been mawin,
 ' When ither folk are busy sawin !'
 It seem'd to mak a kind o' stan',
 But naething spak ;
 At length, says I, ' Friend ! whare ye gaun ?'
 ' Will ye go back ?'

It spak right howe,—‘ My name is *Death*,
 ‘ But be na’ fley’d.—Quoth I, ‘ Guid faith,
 ‘ Ye’re may be come to stap my breath ;
 ‘ But tent me, billie ;
 ‘ I red ye weel, tak care o’ skaith,
 ‘ See, there’s a gully !’
 ‘ Gudeman,’ quo’ he, ‘ put up your whittle,
 ‘ I’m no’ ‘*the gully*’ to try its mettle ;
 ‘ But if I did, I wad be kittle
 ‘ To be mislear’d ;
 ‘ I wad na mind it, no that spittle
 ‘ Out-owre my beard.’
 ‘ Weel, weel!’ says I, ‘ a bargain be’t ;
 ‘ Come, gies your hand, an’ sae we’re gree’t ;
 ‘ We’ll ease our shanks an tak a seat—
 ‘ Come, gies your news ,
 ‘ This while ye hae been mony a gate,
 ‘ At mony a house.’
 ‘ Ay, ay!’ quo’ he, an’ shook his head,
 ‘ It’s e’en a lang, lang time indeed
 ‘ Sin’ I began to nick the thread,
 ‘ An’ choke the breath :
 ‘ Folk maun do something for their bread,
 ‘ An’ sae maun *Death*.
 ‘ Sax thousand years are near-hand fled
 ‘ Sin I was to the butching bred,
 ‘ An’ mony a scheme in vain’s been laid,
 ‘ To stap or scar me ;
 ‘ Till ane *Hornbook’s* ta’en up the trade,
 ‘ And faith! he’ll waur me.
 ‘ Ye ken *Jock Hornbook* i’ the Clachan,
 ‘ Deil mak his king’s-hood in a spleuchan!
 ‘ He’s grown sae weel acquaint wi’ *Buchan*
 ‘ And ither chaps, ,
 ‘ The weans haud out their fingers laughin,
 ‘ An’ pouk my hips.

' See, here's a scythe, an' there's a dart,
 ' They hae pierc'd mony a gallant heart ;
 ' But Doctor *Hornbook* wi' his art
 ' An' cursed skill,
 ' Has made them baith no worth a f—t,
 ' D—n'd haet they'll kill !
 ' 'Twas but yestreen, nae farther gane,
 ' I threw a noble throw at ane ;
 ' Wi' less, I'm sure, I've hundreds slain ;
 ' But deil-ma' care,
 ' It just play'd dirl on the bane,
 ' But did nae mair.
 ' *Hornbook* was by, wi' ready art,
 ' An' had sae fortify'd the part,
 ' That when I look'd to my dart,
 ' It was sae blunt,
 ' Fient haet o't wad hae pierc'd the heart
 ' Of a kail-runt.
 ' I drew my scythe in sic a fury,
 ' I near-hand cowpit wi' my hurry,
 ' But yet the bauld *Apothecary*
 ' Withstood the shock ;
 ' I might as weel hae try'd a quarry
 ' O' hard whin rock.
 ' Ev'n them he canna get attended,
 ' Altho' their face he ne'er had kend it,
 ' Just —— in a kail-blade, an' send it,
 ' As soon's he smells 't,
 ' Baith their disease, and what will mend it,
 ' At once he tells 't.
 ' And then a' doctor's saws an' whittles,
 ' Of a' dimensions, shapes, an' mettles,
 ' A' kinds o' boxes, mugs, an' bottles,
 ' He's sure to hae ;
 ' Their Latin names as fast he rattles
 ' As A B C.

- ' Calces o' fossils, earths, and trees ;
 ' True sal-marinum o' the seas ;
 ' The farina of beans an' pease,
 ' He has't in plenty ;
 ' Aqua-fontis, what you please,
 ' He can content ye.
 ' Forbye some new, uncommon weapons,
 ' Urnus spiritus of capons ,
 ' Or mite-horn shavings, filings,
 ' Distill'd *per se* ,
 ' Sal-alkali o' midge-tails-clippings,
 ' And mony mae '
 ' Waes me for *Johnie Ged's Hole* now,
 Quoth I, ' if that thae news be true !
 ' His braw calf-ward whare gowans grew,
 ' Sae white and bonie,
 ' Nae doubt they'll rive it wi' the plew ;
 ' They'll ruin *Johnie* ! '
 The creature grain'd an eldritch laugh,
 And says, ' Ye needna yoke the pleugh,
 ' Kirkyards will soon be till'd eneugh,
 ' Tak ye nae fear :
 ' They'll a' be trench'd wi mony a sheugh,
 ' In twa-three year.
 ' Whare I kill'd ane, a fair strae death,
 ' By loss o' blood or want of breath,
 ' This night I'm free to tak my aith,
 ' That *Hornbook's* skill
 ' Has clad a score i' their last clath,
 ' By drap an' pill.
 ' An honest wabster to his trade,
 ' Whase wife's twa nieves were scarce weel-bred,
 ' Gat tippence-worth to mend her head,
 ' When it was sair ;
 ' The wife slade cannie to her bed,
 ' But ne'er spak mair.

'A country laird had ta'en the batts,
 'Or some curmurring in his guts,
 'His only son for *Hornbook* sets,
 'An' pays him well:
 The lad, for twa guid gimmer-pets
 'Was laird himsel.

'A bonie lass—ye kend her name—
 'Some ill-brewn drink that hov'd her wame;
 'She trusts hersel, to hide the shame,
 'In *Hornbook's* care;
 '*Horn* sent her aff to her lang hame.
 'To hide it there.

'That's just a swatch o' *Hornbook's* way;
 'Thus goes he on from day to day,
 'Thus does he poison, kill, an' slay,
 'An's weel paid for't;
 'Yet stops me o' my lawfu' prey,
 'Wi' his d—n'd dirt:

'But, hark! I'll tell you of a plot,
 'Tho' dinna ye be speakin' o't;
 'I'll nail the self-conceited sot,
 'As dead's a herrin;
 'Niest time we meet, I'll wad a groat,
 'He gets his fairin!'

But just as he began to tell,
 The auld kirk-hammer strak the bell
 Some wee short hour ayont the *twal*,
 Which rais'd us baith:
 I took the way that pleas'd mysel,
 And sae did *Death*.

EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK.³⁶

AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD—APRIL 1, 1785.

WHILE briers an' woodbines budding green,
 An' patricks scaichin loud at e'en,
 An' morning poussie whiddin seen,
 Inspire my muse,
 This freedom, in an unknown frien',
 I pray excuse.

On Fasten-e'en we had a rockin,
 To ca' the crack and weave our stockin ;
 And there was muckle fun and jokin,
 Ye need na doubt ;
 At length we had a hearty yokin,
 At "sang about."

There was ae sang, amang the rest,
 Aboon them a' it pleas'd me best,
 That some kind husband had address
 To some sweet wife ;
 It thirl'd the heart-strings thro' the breast,
 A' to the life.

I've scarce heard ought describ'd sae weel,
 What gen'rous, manly bosoms feel ;
 Thought I, " can this be Pope, or Steele,
 Or Beattie's wark ? "
 They tauld me 'twas an odd kind chiel
 About Muirkirk.

It pat me fidgin-fain to hear't,
 An' sae about him there I speir't ;
 Then a' that kent him round declar'd
 He had *ingine* ;
 That nane excell'd it, few cam near't,
 It was sae fine :

A set o' dull, conceited hashies
 Confuse their brains in college-classes !
 They gang in stirks, and come out asses,
 Plain truth to speak ;
 An' syne they think to climb Parnassus
 By dint o' Greek !

Gie me ae spark o' nature's fire,
 That's a' the learning I desire ,
 Then tho' I drudge thro' dub an' mire
 At pleugh or cart,
 My muse, tho' hamely in attire,
 May touch the heart.

O for a spunk o' Allan's glee,
 Or Fergusson's, the bauld an' slee,
 Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be,
 If I can hit it !
 That would be lear eneugh for me,
 If I could get it.

Now, sir, if ye hae friends enow,
 Tho' real friends I b'lieve are few ;
 Yet, if your catalogue be fu',
 I'se no insist :
 But, gif ye want ae friend that's true,
 I'm on your list

I winna blaw about mysel,
 As ill I like my fauts to tell ;
 But friends, an' folk that wish me well,
 They sometime roose me ;
 Tho' I maun own, as mony still
 As far abuse me.

There's ae wee faut they whiles lay to me,
 I like the lasses—Gude forgie me !
 For mony a plack they wheedle frae me
 At dance or fair ,
 Maybe some ither thing they gie me,
 They weel can spare.

But Mauchline Race or Mauchline Fair,
I should be proud to meet you there :
We'se gie ae night's discharge to care,
If we forgather ;
An' hae a swap o' rhyming-ware
Wi' ane anither.

The four-gill chap, we'se gar him clatter,
An' kirsen him wi' reekin water ;
Syne we'll sit down an' tak our whitter,
To cheer our heart ;
An' faith, we'se be acquainted better
Before we part.

Awa ye selfish, warly race,
Wha think that havins, sense, an' grace,
Ev'n love an' friendship should give place
To catch-the-plack !
I dinna like to see your face,
Nor hear your crack.

But ye whom social pleasure charms,
Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms,
Who hold your being on the terms,
" Each aid the others,"
Come to my bowl, come to my arms,
My friends, my brothers !

But, to conclude my lang epistle,
As my auld pen's worn to the gristle,
Twa lines frae you would gar me fissle,
Who am most fervent.
While I can either sing or whistle,
Your friend and servant.



BU.

"Folk maun do something for their bread,
An' sae maun *Death*."

SECOND EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK.

APRIL 21, 1785.

WHILE new-ca'd kye rowte at the stake
An' pownies reek in pleugh or braik,
This hour on e'enin's edge I take,
 To own I'm debtor
To honest-hearted, auld Lapraik,
 For his kind letter.

Forjesket sair, with weary legs,
Rattlin the corn out-owre the rigs,
Or dealing thro' amang the naigs
 Their ten-hours' bite,
My awkward Muse sair pleads and begs
 I would na write.

The tapetless, ramfeezl'd hizzie,
She's saft at best an' something lazy:
Quo' she, "ye ken we've been sae busy
 This month an' mair,
That trowth, my head is grown right dizzie,
 An' something sair."

Her dowff excuses pat me mad;
"Conscience," says I, "ye thowless jade!
I'll write, an' that a hearty blaud,
 This vera night;
So dinna ye affront your trade,
 But rhyme it right.

"Shall bauld Lapraik, the king o' hearts,
Tho' mankind were a pack o' cartes,
Roose ye sae weel for your deserts,
 In terms sae friendly;
Yet ye'll neglect to shaw your parts
 An' thank him kindly?"

Then may Lapraik and Burns arise,
 To reach their native, kindred skies,
 And sing their pleasures, hopes an' joys
 In some mild sphere;
 Still closer knit in friendship's ties,
 Each passing year'

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM SIMSON,
 SCHOOLMASTER, OCHILTREE—MAY 1785.

I GAT your letter, winsome Willie;
 Wi' gratefu' heart I thank you brawlie;
 Tho' I maun say't, I wad be silly,
 And unco vain,
 Should I believe, my coaxin billie,
 Your flatterin strain.

But I'se believe ye kindly meant it:
 I sud be laith to think ye hinted
 Ironie satire, sidelins sklentied
 On my poor musie;
 Tho' in sic phraisin terms ye've penn'd it,
 I scarce excuse ye.

My senses wad be in a creel,
 Should I but dare a hope to speel,
 Wi' Allan, or wi' Gilbertfield,
 The braes o' fame;
 Or Fergusson, the writer-chiel,
 A deathless name.

(O Fergusson! thy glorious parts
 Ill suited law's dry, musty arts!
 My curse upon your whunstane hearts,
 Ye E'nbrugh gentry!
 The tythe o' what ye waste at cartes
 Wad stow'd his pantry!)

Yet when a tale comes i' my head,
Or lassies gie my heart a screed—
As whiles they're like to be my dead,
(O sad disease!)

I kittle up my rustic reed ;
It gies me ease.

Auld Coila, now, may fidge fu' fain,
She's gotten poets o' her ain ;
Chiels wha their chanter's winna hain,
But tune their lays,
Till echoes a' resound again
Her weel-sung praise.

Nae poet thought her worth his while,
To set her name in measur'd style ,
She lay like some unkenn'd-of isle
Beside New Holland,
Or whare wild-meeting oceans boil
Besouth Magellan.

Ramsay an' famous Fergusson
Gied Forth an' Tay a lift aboon ;
Yarrow an' Tweed, to monie a tune,
Owre Scotland rings ;
While Irwin, Lugar, Ayr, an' Doon
Naebody sings.

Th' Illissus, Tiber, Thames, an' Seine,
Glide sweet in monie a tunefu' line :
But, Willie, set your fit to mine,
An' cock your crest ;
We'll gar our streams an' burnies shine
Up wi' the best !

We'll sing auld Coila's plains an' fells,
Her moors red-brown wi' heather bells,
Her banks an' braes, her dens and dells,
Whare glorious Wallace
Aft bure the gree, as story tells,
Frae Suthron billies.

At Wallace' name, what Scottish blood
But boils up in a spring-tide flood!
Oft have our fearless fathers' strode
By Wallace' side,
Still pressing onward, red-wat-shod,
Or glorious dy'd!

O sweet are Coila's haughs an' woods,
Where lintwhites chant amang the buds,
And jinkin hares, in amorous whids,
Their loves enjoy;
While thro' the braes the cushat croods
With wailfu' cry!

Ev'n winter bleak has charms to me,
When winds rave thro' the naked tree;
Or frosts on hills of Ochiltree
Are hoary gray;
Or blinding drifts wild-furious flee,
Dark'ning the day!

O Nature! a' thy shews an' forms
To feeling, pensive hearts hae charms!
Whether the summer kindly warms,
Wi' life an' light;
Or winter howls, in gusty storms,
The lang, dark night!

The muse, nae poet ever fand her,
Till by himsel he learn'd to wander,
Adown some trottin burn's meander,
An' no think lang:

O sweet to stray, an' pensive ponder
A heart-felt sang!

The warly race may drudge an' drive,
Hog-shouther, jundie, stretch, an' strive;
Let me fair Nature's face describe,
And I, wi' pleasure,
Shall let the busy, grunbling hive
Bum owre their treasure.

Fareweel, " my rhyme-composing " brither!
 We've been owre lang unkenn'd to ither:
 Now let us lay our heads thegither,
 In love fraternal:
 May envy wallop in a tether,
 Black fiend, infernal!

While Highlandmen hate tolls an' taxes;
 While moorlan herds like guid, fat braxies;
 While terra firma, on her axis,
 Diurnal turns;
 Count on a friend, in faith an' practice,
 In Robert Burns.

POSTSCRIPT.

MY memory's no worth a preen;
 I had amaist forgotten clean,
 Ye bade me write you what they mean
 By this 'new-light,'
 'Bout which our herds sae aft hae been
 Maist like to fight

In days when mankind were but callans
 At grammar, logic, an' sic talents,
 They took nae pains their speech to balance,
 Or rules to gie,
 But spak their thoughts in plain, braid lallans,
 Like you or me.

In thae auld times, they thought the moon,
 Just like a sark, or pair o' shoon,
 Wore by degrees, till her last roon
 Gaed past their viewin;
 An' shortly after she was done
 They gat a new ane.

This passed for certain, undisputed ;
 It ne'er cam i' their heads to doubt it,
 Till chieks gat up an' wad confute it,
 An' ca'd it wrang ;
 An' muckle din there was about it,
 Baith loud an' lang.

Some herds, weel learn'd upo' the beuk,
 Wad threap auld folk the thing misteuk ;
 For 'twas the auld moon turn'd a neuk
 An' out o' sight,
 An' blacklins-comin to the leuk,
 She grew mair bright.

This was deny'd, it was affirm'd ;
 The herds and hissels were alarm'd ;
 The rev'rend gray-beards rav'd an' storm'd,
 That beardless laddies
 Should think they better were inform'd,
 Than their auld daddies.

Frae less to mair, it gaed to sticks ;
 Frae words an' aiths, to clours an' nicks ;
 An monie a fallow gat his licks,
 Wi' hearty crunt ;
 An' some, to learn them for their tricks,
 Were hang'd an' brunt.

This game was play'd in mony lands,
 An "auld-light" caddies bure sic hands,
 That faith, the youngsters took the sands
 Wi' nimble shanks ;
 Till lairds forbad, by strict commands,
 Sic bluidy pranks.

But "new-light" herds gat sic a cove,
 Folk thought them ruin'd stick-an-stowe ;
 Till now, amaist on ev'ry knowe
 Ye'll find ane plac'd ;
 An' some, their "new-light" fair avow,
 Just quite barefac'd.

Nae doubt the "auld-light" flocks are bleatin ;
 Their zealous herds are vex'd and sweatin ;
 Mysel, I've even seen them greetin

Wi' girmn spite,
 To hear the moon sae sadly lie'd on
 By word an' write.

But shortly they will cove the louns !
 Some "auld-light" herds in neebor touns
 Are mind't, in things they ca' balloons,
 To tak a flight ;

An' stay ae month among the moons
 An' see them right.

Guid observation they will gie them ;
 An' when the auld moon's gaun to lea'e them,
 The hindmost shaird, they'll fetch it wi' them,
 Just i' their pouch ;

An' when the "new-light" billies see them,
 I think they'll crouch !

Sae, ye observe that a' this clatter
 Is naething but a "moonshine-matter ;"
 But tho' dull prose-folk Latin splatter
 In logic tulye,

I hope we bardies ken some better
 Than mind sic brulye.

ONE NIGHT AS I DID WANDER

A FRAGMENT.

ONE night as I did wander,
 When corn begins to shoot,
 I sat me down to ponder,
 Upon an auld tree-root :
 Auld Ayr ran by before me,
 And bicker'd to the seas,
 A cushat crooded o'er me,
 That echoed through the braes.

THO' CRUEL FATE.

THO' cruel fate should bid us part,
 Far as the pole and line,
 Her dear idea round my heart,
 Should tenderly entwine.
 Tho' mountains rise, and deserts howl,
 And oceans roar between ;
 Yet, dearer than my deathless soul,
 I still would love my Jean.

RANTIN, ROVIN ROBIN.⁸⁷

THERE was a lad was born in Kyle,
 But whatna day o' whatna style,
 I doubt it's hardly worth the while
 To be sae nice wi' Robin.

Chorus.—Robin was a rovin boy,
 Rantin, rovin, rantin, rovin,
 Robin was a rovin boy,
 Rantin, rovin Robin !

Our monarch's hindmost year but ane
 Was five-and-twenty days begun,
 'Twas then a blast o' Janwar' win'
 Blew hansel in on Robin.
 Robin was, etc.

The gossip keekit in his loof,
 Quo' scho, "Wha lives will see the proof,
 This waly boy will be nae coof :
 I think we'll ca' him Robin."
 Robin was, etc.

“He'll hae misfortunes great an' sma
 But aye a heart aboon them a',
 He'll be a credit till us a'—
 We'll a' be proud o' Robin.”
 Robin was, etc.

“But sure as three times three mak nine,
 I see by ilka score and line,
 This chap will dearly like our kin',
 So leeze me on thee! Robin.”
 Robin was, etc.

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT RUISSEAU³⁸

Now Robin lies in his last lair,
 He'll gabble rhyme, nor sing nae mair;
 Could poverty, wi' hungry stare,
 Nae mair shall fear him;
 Nor anxious fear, nor cankert care,
 E'er mair come near him.

To tell the truth, they seldom fash'd him,
 Except the moment that they crush'd him;
 For sune as chance or fate had hush'd 'em,
 Tho' e'er sae short,
 Then wi' a rhyme or sang he hash'd 'em,
 And thought it sport.

Tho' he was bred to kintra-wark,
 And counted was baith wight and stark,
 Yet that was never Robin's mark
 To mak a man;
 But tell him, he was learn'd and clark,
 Ye roos'd him then!

EPISTLE TO JOHN GOLDIE, IN KILMARNOCK.³⁹

AUTHOR OF THE GOSPEL RECOVERED—AUGUST 1785.

O GOWDIE, terror o' the whigs,
Dread o' blackcoats and reverend wigs!
Sour Bigotry on his last legs
 Girns an' looks back,
Wishing the ten Egyptian plagues
 May seize you quick.

Poor gapin, glowrin Superstition!
Wae's me, she's in a sad condition:
Fye! bring *Black Jock*, her state physician,
 To see her water:
Alas, there's ground for great suspicion
 She'll ne'er get better.

Enthusiasm's past redemption,
Gane in a gallopin consumption:
Not a' her quacks, wi' a' their gumption,
 Can ever mend her;
Her feeble pulse gies strong presumption,
 She'll soon surrender.

Auld Orthodoxy lang did grapple,
For every hole to get a stapple;
But now she fetches at the thrapple,
 An' fights for breath;
Haste, gie her name up in the chapel,
 Near unto death.

It's you an' *Taylor* are the chief
To blame for a' this black mischief;
But could the L—d's ain folk get leave,
 A toom tar barrel
An' twa red peats wad bring relief,
 And end the quarrel.

For me, my skill's but very sma',
 An' skill in prose I've nane ava';
 But quietlenswise, between us twa,
 Weel may ye speed!
 And tho' they sud you sair misca',
 Ne'er fash your head.

E'en swinge the dogs, and thresh them sicker!
 The mair they squeel ay chap the thicker;
 An still 'mang hands a hearty bicker
 O' something stout;
 It gars an owthor's pulse beat quicker,
 And helps his wit.

There's naething like the honest nappy;
 Whare'll ye e'er see men sae happy,
 Or women sonsie, saft an sappy,
 'Tween morn and morn,
 As them wha like to taste the drappie,
 In glass or horn?

I've seen me daez't upon a time,
 I scarce could wink or see a styme;
 Just ae half-mutchkin does me prime,
 (Ought less, is little,)
 Then back I rattle on the rhyme,
 As gleg's a whittle.

THIRD EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK.

GUID speed and furdur to you, Johnie,
 Guid health, hale han's an' weather bonie;
 Now, when ye're nicken down fu' cannie
 The staff o' bread,
 May ye ne'er want a stoup o' bran'y
 To clear your head.

May Boreas never thresh your rigs,
Nor kick your rickles aff their legs,
Sendin the stuff o'er muirs an' hagg
 Like drivin wrack;
But may the tapmost grain that wags
 Come to the sack.

I'm bizzie, too, an' skelpin at it,
But, bitter, daudin showers hae wat it;
Sae my auld stumple pen I gat it
 Wi' muckle wark,
An' took my jocteleg an' whatt it,
 Like ony clark.

It's now twa month that I'm your debtor,
For your braw, nameless, dateless letter,
Abusing me for harsh ill-nature
 On holy men,
While deil a hair yoursel ye're better,
 But mair profane.

But let the kirk-folk ring their bells,
Let's sing about our noble sel's:
We'll cry nae jads frae heathen hills
 To help, or roose us;
But browster wives an' whisky stills,
 They are the muses.

Your friendship, sir, I winna quat it,
An' if ye mak' objections at it,
Then hand in nieve some day we'll knot it,
 An' witness take,
And when wi' usquabae we've wat it,
 It winna break.

But if the beast and branks be spar'd
Till kye be gaun without the herd,
And a' the vittell in the yard,
 And theekit right,
I mean your ingle-side to guard
 Ae winter night.

Then muse-inspirin aquavitæ
 Shall mak us baith sae blythe and witty,
 Till ye forget ye're auld an' gatty,
 And be as canty
 As ye were nine years less than thretty—
 Sweet ane an' twenty!

But stooks are cowpet wi' the blast,
 And now the sunn keeks in the west,
 Then I maun rin amang the rest,
 An' quat my chanter;
 Sae I subscribe mysel in haste,
 Yours, Rab the Ranter.

Sept. 13, 1785.

EPISTLE TO THE REV. JOHN M'MATH,⁴⁰
 INCLOSING A COPY OF "HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER," WHICH HE
 HAD REQUESTED, SEPT. 17, 1785.

WHILE at the stook the shearers cow'r
 To shun the bitter blaudin' show'r,
 Or in gulravage rinnin scow'r,
 To pass the time,
 To you I dedicate the hour
 In idle rhyme

My musie, tir'd wi' mony a sonnet,
 On gown, an' ban', an' douse black bonnet,
 Is grown right eerie now she's done it,
 Lest they shou'd blame her,
 An' rouse their holy thunder on it
 And anathem her.

I own 'twas rash, an' rather hardy,
 That I a simple, country bardie,
 Shou'd meddle wi' a pack sae sturdy,
 Wha, if they ken me,
 Can easy, wi' a single wordie,
 Louse h—ll upon me.

But I gae mad at their grimaces,
 Their sighin' cantin, grace-proud faces,
 Their three-mile prayers, an' half-mile graces,
 Their raxin conscience,
 Whase greed, revenge, and pride disgraces
 Waur nor their nonsense.

There's Gaw'n, misca'd waur than a beast,
 Wha has mair honor in his breast
 Than mony scores as guid's the priest
 Wha sae abused him:
 And may a bard no crack his jest
 What way they've us'd him?

See him, the poor man's friend in need,
 The gentleman in word an' deed—
 An' shall his fame an' honor bleed
 By worthless skellums,
 An' not a muse erect her head
 To cove the blellums?

O Pope, had I thy satire's darts
 To gie the rascals their deserts,
 I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts,
 An' tell aloud
 Their jugglin hocus-pocus arts
 To cheat the crowd.

God knows, I'm no the thing I shou'd be,
 Nor am I even the thing I cou'd be,
 But twenty times I rather would be
 An atheist clean,
 Than under gospel colors hid be
 Just for a screen.

An honest man may like a glass,
 An honest man may like a lass,
 But mean revenge, an' malice fause
 He'll still disdain,
 An' then cry zeal for gospel laws,
 Like some we ken.



BU

"I throw the wee stools o'er the neckle,
While round the fire the gieglets keckle,
To see me loup."

They take religion in their mouth ;
 They talk o' mercy, grace, an' truth,
 For what ? to gie their malice skouth
 On some pur wight,
 An' hunt him down, owre right and ruth,
 To ruin streicht.

All hail, Religion ! maid divine !
 Pardon a muse sae mean as mine,
 Who in her rough imperfect line
 Thus daurs to name thee ;
 To stigmatise false friends of thine
 Can ne'er defame thee.

Tho' blotch't and foul wi' mony a stain,
 An' far unworthy of thy train,
 With trembling voice I tune my strain,
 To join with those
 Who boldly dare thy cause maintain
 In spite of foes .

In spite o' crowds, in spite o' mobs,
 In spite o' undermining jobs,
 In spite o' dark banditti stabs
 At worth an' merit,
 By scoundrels, even wi' holy robes,
 But hellish spirits

O Ayr ! my dear, my native ground,
 Within thy presbyterial bound
 A candid liberal band is found
 Of public teachers,
 As men, as christians too, renown'd,
 An' manly preachers.

Sir, in that circle you are nam'd ;
 Sir, in that circle you are fam'd ,
 An' some, by whom your doctrine's blam'd
 (Which gies ye honour)
 Even, sir, by them your heart's esteem'd,
 An' winning manner.

Pardon this freedom I have ta'en,
 An' if impertinent I've been,
 Impute it not, good sir, in ane
 Whase heart ne'er wrang'd ye,
 But to his utmost would befriend
 Ought that belang'd ye.

SECOND EPISTLE TO DAVIE,

A BROTHER POET.

AULD NEIBOUR,

I'm three times doubly o'er your debtor,
 For your auld-farrant, frien'ly letter ;
 Tho' I maun say't I doubt ye flatter,
 Ye speak sae fair ;
 For my puir, silly, rhymin clatter
 Some less maun sair.

Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle,
 Lang may your elbuck jink an' diddle,
 To cheer you thro' the weary widdle
 O' war'ly cares ;
 Till bairns' bairns kindly cuddle
 Your auld grey hairs.

But Davie, lad, I'm rede ye're glaikit ;
 I'm tauld the muse ye hae negleckit ;
 An' gif it's sae, ye sud be licket
 Until ye fyke ;
 Sic hauns as you sud ne'er be faiket,
 Be hain't what like.

For me, I'm on Parnassus' brink,
 Rivin the words to gar them clink ;
 Whyles daez't wi' love, whyles daez't wi' drink,
 Wi' jads or masons ;
 An' whyles, but aye owre late, I think
 Braw sober lessons.

Of a' the thoughtless sons o' man,
 Commen' to me the bardie clan;
 Except it be some idle plan
 O' rhym'in clink—
 The devil-haet, that I sud ban—
 They ever think.

Nae thought, nae view, nae scheme o' livin,
 Nae cares to gie us joy or grievin,
 But just the pouchie put the nieve in,
 An' while ought's there,
 Then, hiltie, skiltie, we gae screevin,
 An' fash nae mair.

Leeze me on rhyme! it's ay a treasure,
 My chief, amaist my only pleasure;
 At hame, a-fiel', at wark, or leisure,
 The muse, poor hizzie!
 Tho' rough an' raploch be her measure,
 She's seldom lazy.

Haud to the muse, my dainty Davie:
 The warl' may play you monie a shavie:
 But for the muse, she'll never leave ye,
 Tho' e'er sae purr,
 Na, even tho' limp'in wi' the spavie
 Frae door to door.

YOUNG PEGGY.⁴¹

YOUNG Peggy blooms our boniest lass,
 Her blush' is like the morning,
 The rosy dawn, the springing grass,
 With early gems adorning
 Her eyes outshine the radiant beams
 That gild the passing shower,
 And glitter o'er the crystal streams,
 And cheer each fresh'ning flower.

Her lips, more than the cherries bright,
A richer dye has graced them ;
They charm th' admiring gazer's sight,
And sweetly tempt to taste them ;
Her smile is as the evening mild,
When feather'd pairs are courting,
And little lambkins wanton wild,
In playful bands disporting.

Were Fortune lovely Peggy's foe,
Such sweetness would relent her ;
As blooming spring unbends the brow
Of surly savage Winter.
Detraction's eye no aim can gain,
Her winning pow'rs to lessen ;
And fretful Envy grins in vain
The poison'd tooth to fasten.

Ye Pow'rs of Honor, Love, and Truth
From ev'ry ill defend her !
Inspire the highly-favour'd youth
The destinies intend her :
Still fan the sweet connubial flame
Responsive in each bosom ,
And bless the dear parental name
With many a filial blossom.

FAREWELL TO BALLOCHMYLE.⁴²

THE Catrine woods were yellow seen,
The flowers decay'd on Catrine lee,
Nae lav'rock sang on hillock green,
But nature sicken'd on the e'e.
Thro' faded groves Maria sang,
Hersel in beauty's bloom the while ;
And ay the wild-wood echoes rang,
Fareweel the braes o' Ballochmyle.

Low in your wintry beds, ye flowers,
 Again ye'll flourish fresh and fair;
 Ye birdies dumb, in with'ring bowers,
 Again ye'll charm the vocal air.
 But here, alas! for me nae mair
 Shall birdie charm, or floweret smile;
 Fareweel the bonie banks of Ayr,
 Fareweel, fareweel! sweet Ballochmyle!

FRAGMENTS—HER FLOWING LOCKS.

HER flowing locks, the raven's wing,
 Adown her neck and bosom hing;
 How sweet unto that breast to cling,
 And round that neck entwine her!

Her lips are roses wat wi' dew,
 O, what a feast, her bonie mou!
 Her cheeks a mair celestial hue,
 A crimson still diviner!

HALLOWE'EN.⁴³

"Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
 The simple pleasures of the lowly train;
 To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
 One native charm, than all the gloss of art."—GOLDSMITH.

UPON that night, when fairies light
 On Cassilis Downans^a dance,
 Or owre the lays, in splendid blaze,
 On sprightly coursers prance;
 Or for Colean the rout is ta'en,
 Beneath the moon's pale beams;
 There, up the Cove,^b to stray an' rove,
 Among the rocks and streams
 To sport that night:

Amang the bonie winding banks,
 Where Doon rins, wimplin, clear ;
 Where Bruce^e ance ruled the martial ranks,
 An' shook his Carrick spear ;
 Some merry, friendly, country-folks
 Together did convene,
 To burn their mts, an' pou their stocks,
 An' haud their Hallowe'en
 Fu' blythe that night.

The lasses feat, an' cleanly neat,
 Mair braw than when they're fine ;
 Their faces blythe, fu' sweetly kythe,
 Hearts leal, an' warm, an' kin' :
 The lads sae trig, wi' wooer-babs
 Weel-knotted on their garten ;
 Some unco blate, an' some wi' gabs
 Gar lasses' hearts gang startin
 Whyles fast at night.

Then, first an' foremost, thro' the kail,
 Their 'stocks'^d maun a' be sought ance ;
 They steek their een, an' grape an' wale
 For muckle anes, an' straught anes.
 Poor hav'rel Will fell aff the drift,
 An' wandered thro' the 'bow-kail,'
 An' pou't for want o' better shift,
 A runt, was like a sow-tail
 Sae bow't that night.

Then, straught or crooked, yird or nane,
 They roar an' cry a' throw'ther ;
 The vera wee-things, toddlin, rin,
 Wi' stocks out owre their shouther :
 An' gif the custok's sweet or sour,
 Wi' joctelegs they taste them ;
 Syne coziely, aboon the door,
 Wi' cannie care, they've plac'd them
 To lie that night.

The lasses staw frae 'mang them a',
 To pou their stalks o' corn;^e
 But Rab slips out, an' jinks about,
 Behint the muckle thorn:
 He grippet Nelly hard an' fast;
 Loud skirl'd a' the lasses;
 But her tap-pickle maist was lost,
 Whan kiutlin in the 'fause-house'^f
 Wi' him that night

The auld guid-wife's weel-hoordet nits^g
 Are round an' round divided,
 An' mony lads an' lasses' fates
 Are there that night decided:
 Some kindle couthie, side by side,
 An' burn i' the fire trimly;
 Some start awa wi' saucy pride,
 An' jump out owre the chimlie
 Fu' high that night.

Jean slips in twa, wi' tentie e'e;
 Wha 'twas, she wadna tell;
 But this is *Jock*, and this is *me*,
 She says in to hersel:
 He bleez'd owre her, an' she owre him,
 As they wad never mair part;
 Till fuff! he started up the lum,
 And Jean had e'en a sair heart
 To see't that night.

Poor Willie, wi' his bow-kail runt,
 Was brunt wi' primsie Mallie;
 An' Mary, nae doubt, took the drunt,
 To be compared to Willie:
 Mall's nit lap out, wi' pridefu' fling,
 An' her ain fit, it brunt it;
 While Willie lap, an' swoor by 'jing,'
 'Twas just the way he want'd
 To be that night.

Nell had the 'fause-house' in her min',
 She pits hersel an' Rob in ;
 In loving bleeze they sweetly join,
 Till white in ase they're sobbin :
 Nell's heart was dancin at the view ;
 She whisper'd Rob to leuk for't :
 Rob, stownins, prie'd her bonie mou,
 Fu' cozie in the neuk for't,
 Unseen that night.

But Merran sat behint their backs,
 Her thoughts on Andrew Bell ;
 She lea'es them gashin at their cracks,
 An' slips out-by hersel :
 She thro' the yard the nearest taks,
 An' for the kiln she goes then,
 An' darklins grapet for the 'bauks,'
 And in the 'blue clue'ⁿ throws then,
 Right fear't that night.

An' ay she win't, an' ay she swat—
 I wat she made nae jaukin ;
 Till something held within the pat,
 Guid L—d ! but she was quaukin !
 But whether 'twas the deil himsel,
 Or whether 'twas a bauk-en',
 Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
 She did na wait on talkin
 To spier that night.

Wee Jenny to her graunie says,
 "Will ye go wi' me, graunie ?
 I'll eat the apple at the glass,
 I gat frae uncle Johnie :"
 She fuff't her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
 In wrath she was sae vap'rin,
 She notic't na an aizle brunt
 Her braw, new, worset apron
 Out thro' that night.

“Ye little skelpie-limmer’s-face !
I daur you try sic sportin,
As seek the foul thief ony place,
For him to spae your fortune :
Nae doubt but ye may get a sight !
Great cause ye hae to fear it ;
For mony a ane has gotten a fright,
An’ liv’d an’ died deleeret,
On sic a night.

“Ae hairst afore the Sherra-moor,
I mind’t as weel’s yestreen—
I was a gilpey then, I’m sure
I was na past fyfteen :
The simmer had been cauld an’ wat,
An’ stuff was unco green ,
An’ ay a rantin kirm we gat,
An’ just on Hallowe’en
It fell that night.

“Our ‘stibble-rig’ was Rab M’Graen,
A clever, sturdy fallow ,
His sin gat Eppie Sim wi’ wean,
That liv’d in Achmacalla :
He gat hemp-seed,* I mind it weel,
An’ he made unco light o’t ;
But mony a day was by himsel,
He was sae sairly frightened
That vera night”

Then up gat fechtin Jamie Fleck,
An’ he swoor by his conscience,
That he could saw hemp-seed a peck ;
For it was a’ but nonsense :
The auld guidman raught down the pock,
An’ out a handfu’ gied him ;
Syne bad him slip frae ’mang the folk,
Sometime when nae ane see’d*him,
An’ try’t that night.

He marches thro' amang the stacks,
 Tho' he was something sturtin ;
 The graip he for a harrow taks,
 An' haurls at his curpin :
 And ev'ry now an' then, he says,
 " Hemp-seed I saw thee,
 An' her that is to be my lass
 Come after me, an' draw thee
 As fast this night."

He whistl'd up ' Lord Lennox' March,
 To keep his courage cheery ;
 Altho' his hair began to arch,
 He was sae fley'd an' eerie :
 Till presently he hears a squeak,
 An' then a grane an' gruntle ;
 He by his shouther gae a keek,
 An' tumbled wi' a wintle
 Out-owre that night.

He roar'd a horrid murder-shout,
 In dreadfu' desperation !
 An' young an' auld come rinnin out,
 An' hear the sad narration :
 He swoor 'twas hilchin Jean M'Craw,
 Or crouchie Merran Humphie—
 Till stop! she trotted thro' them a' ;
 And wha was it but grumphie
 Asteer that night ?

Meg fain wad to the barn gaen,
 To winn three wechts o' naething ;^t
 But for to meet the deil her lane,
 She pat but little faith in :
 She gies the herd a pickle nits,
 An' twa red cheekit apples,
 To watch, while for the barn she sets,
 In hopes to see Tam Kipples
 That vera night.

She turns the key wi' cannie thraw,
 An' owre the threshold ventures ;
 But first on Sawnie gies a ca',
 Syne bauldly in she enters :
 A ratton rattl'd up the wa',
 An' she cry'd L—d preserve her !
 An' ran thro' midden-hole an' a',
 An' pray'd wi' zeal and fervour,
 Fu' fast that night.

They hoy't out Will, wi' sair advice ;
 They hecht him some fine braw ane ;
 It chanc'd the stack he faddom't thrice,^m
 Was timmer-propt for thrawin .
 He tak's a swirlie auld moss-oak
 For some black, grousome carlin ,
 An' loot a winze, an' drew a stroke,
 Till skin in blypes cam haurlin
 Aff's nieves that night.

A wanton widow Leezie was,
 As cantie as a kittlen ;
 But och ! that night, amang the shaws,
 She gat a fearful settlin !
 She thro' the whins, an' by the cairn,
 An' owre the hill gaed scievin ;
 Whare three lairds' lan's meet at a burn,ⁿ
 To dip her left sark sleeve in,
 Was bent that night.

Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
 As thro' the glen it wimpl't ,
 Whyles round a rocky scaur it strays,
 Whyles in a wiel it dimpl't ;
 Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,
 Wi' bickerin, dancin dazzle ;
 Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
 Below the hazle
 Unseen that night.

Amang the brachens, on the brae,
 Between her an' the moon,
 The deil, or else an outler quey,
 Gat up an' ga'e a croon :
 Poor Leezie's heart maist lap the hool ;
 Near lav'rock-height she jumpet,
 But mist a fit, an' in the pool
 Out-owre the lugs she plumpet,
 Wi' a plunge that night.
 In order, on the clean hearth-stane,
 The 'luggies' o three are ranged ;
 An' ev'ry time great care is ta'en
 To see them duly changed :
 Auld uncle John, wha wedlock's joys
 Sin' 'Mar's-year' did desire,
 Because he gat the toom dish thrice,
 He heaved them on the fire,
 In wrath that night.
 Wi' merry sangs, an' friendly cracks,
 I wat they did na weary ;
 And unco tales, an' funnie jokes—
 Their sports were cheap an' cheery :
 Till butter'd sowens,^a wi' fragrant lunt,
 Set a' their gabs a-steerin ;
 Syne, wi' a social glass o' strunt,
 They parted aff careerin
 Fu' blythe that night.

TO A MOUSE.⁴⁴

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH
 NOVEMBER, 1785.

WEE sleeket, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
 O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
 Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
 Wi' bickerin' brattle!
 I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
 Wi' murderin' pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion,
 Has broken nature's social union,
 An' justifies that ill opinion,
 Which makes thee startle
 At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
 An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve ;
 What then ' poor beastie, thou maun live!
 A damen icker in a thrave
 'S a sma' request ;
 I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
 An' never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
 Its silly wa's the win's are strewn!
 An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
 O' foggage green!
 An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
 Baith snell an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
 An' weary winter comin fast,
 An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
 Thou thought to dwell—
 Till crash! the cruel coulter past
 Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
 Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
 Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
 But house or hald,
 To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
 An' cranreuch cauld!

But Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
 In proving foresight may be vain ,
 The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
 Gang aft agley,
 An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
 For promis'd joy!

ADAM ARMOUR'S PRAYER.⁴⁷

GUDE pity me, because I'm little!
 For though I am an elf o' mettle,
 An' can, like ony wabster's shuttle,
 Jink there or here,
 Yet, scarce as lang's a gude kail-whittle,
 I'm unco queer.

An' now Thou kens our woefu' case;
 For Geordie's "jurr" we're in disgrace,
 Because we "stang'd" her through the place,
 An' hurt her spleuchan;
 For whilk we daurna show our face
 Within the clachan.

An' now we're dernd in dens and hollows,
 And hunted, as was William Wallace,
 Wi' constables—thae blackguard fallows,
 An' sodgers baith;
 But Gude preserve us frae the gallows,
 That shamefu' death!

Auld grim black-bearded Geordie's sel'—
 O shake him owre the mouth o' hell!
 There let him hing, an' roar, an' yell
 Wi' hideous din,
 And if he offers to rebel,
 Then heave him in.

When Death comes in wi' glimmerin blink,
 An' tips auld drucken Nanse the wink,
 May Sautan gie her doup a clink
 Within his yett,
 An' fill her up wi' brimstone drink,
 Red-reekin het.

Though Jock an' hav'rel Jean are merry—
 Some devil seize them in a hurry,
 An' waft them in th' infernal wherry
 Straught through the lake,
 An' gie their hides a noble curry
 Wi' oil of aik!

As for the "jurr"—puir worthless body!
 She's got mischief enough already;
 Wi' stanget hips, and buttocks bluidy,
 She's suffer'd sair;
 But, may she wintle in a woody,
 If she wh—e mair!

THE JOLLY BEGGARS—A CANTATA.⁴⁸

Recitativo.

WHEN lyart leaves bestrow the yird,
 Or wavering like the bauckie-bird,
 Bedim could Boreas' blast;
 When hailstones drive wi' bitter skyte,
 And infant frosts begin to bite,
 In hoary crancreuch drest;
 Ae night at e'en a merry core
 O' randie, gangrel bodies,
 In Poesie-Nansie's held the splore,
 To drink their orra duddies:
 Wi' quaffing and laughing,
 They ranted an' they sang,
 Wi' jumping an' thumping,
 The vera girdle rang.

First, niest the fire, in auld red rags,
 Ane sat, weel brac'd wi' mealy bags,
 And knapsack a' in order;
 His doxy lay within his arm;
 Wi' 'usquebae an' blankets warm
 She blinket on her sodger:



BU.

"I am a son of Mars who have been in many wars,
And show my cuts and scars wherever I come."

I'age 97
G

An' ay he gies the tozie drab
 The tither skelpin kiss,
 While she held up her greedy gab,
 Just like an aumous dish :
 Ilk smack still did crack still,
 Just like a cadger's whip ;
 Then staggering an' swaggering,
 He roar'd this ditty up—

Air.

Tune—"Soldier's Joy."

I am a son of Mars who have been in many wars,
 And show my cuts and scars wherever I come,
 This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench,
 When welcoming the French at the sound of the drum.
 Lal de daudle, etc.

My prenticeship I past where my leader breath'd his last,
 When the bloody die was cast on the heights of Abram :
 And I servèd out my trade when the gallant game was play'd,
 And the Moro low was laid at the sound of the drum.

I lastly was with Curtis among the floating batt'ries,
 And there I left for witness an arm and a limb ;
 Yet let my country need me, with Elliot to head me,
 I'd clatter on my stumps at the sound of a drum.

And now tho' I must beg, with a wooden arm and leg,
 And many a tatter'd rag hanging over my bum,
 I'm as happy with my wallet, my bottle and my callet,
 As when I used in scarlet to follow a drum.

What tho', with hoary locks, I must stand the winter shocks,
 Beneath the woods and rocks, oftentimes for a home,
 When the tother bag I sell, and the tother bottle tell,
 I could meet a troop of hell, at the sound of a drum.

Recitativo.

He ended ; and the kebars sheuk,
 Aboon the chorus roar ;
 While frightened rattons backward leuk,
 An' seek the benmost bore :
 A fairy fiddler frae the neuk,
 He skirl'd out, encore !
 But up arose the martial chuck,
 An' laid the loud uproar.

Air.

Tune—"Sodger Laddie."

I once was a maid, tho' I cannot tell when,
 And still my delight is in proper young men :
 Some one of a troop of dragoons was my daddie,
 No wonder I'm fond of a sodger laddie.

Sing, lal de dal, etc.

The first of my loves was a *clay* blade,
 To rattle the thundering drum was his trade ;
 His leg was so tight, and his cheek was so ruddy,
 Transported I was with my sodger laddie.

But the godly old chaplain left him in the lurch ;
 The sword I forsook for the sake of the church :
 He ventur'd the soul, and I risket the body,
 'Twas then I prov'd false to my sodger laddie.

Full soon I grew sick of my sanctified sot,
 The regiment at large for a husband I got ;
 From the gilded spontoon to the fife I was ready,
 I askèd no more but a sodger laddie.

But the peace it reduc'd me to beg in despair,
 Till I met my old boy in a Cunningham fair ;
 His rag^s regimental, they flutter'd so gaudy,
 My heart it rejoic'd at a sodger laddie.

And now I have liv'd—I know not how long,
 And still I can join in a cup and a song ;
 But whilst with both hands I can hold the glass steady,
 Here's to thee, my hero, my sodger laddie.

Recitativo.

Poor Merry-Andrew, in the neuk,
 Sat guzzling wi' a tinkler-hizzie ;
 They mind't na wha the chorus teuk,
 Between themselves they were sae busy :
 At length, wi' drink an' courting dizzy,
 He stouter'd up an' made a face ;
 Then turn'd an' laid a smack on Grizzie,
 Syne tun'd his pipes wi' grave grimace.

Air

Tune—"Auld Sir Symon."

Sir Wisdom's a fool when he's fou ;
 Sir Knave is a fool in a session ,
 He's there but a prentice I trow,
 But I am a fool by profession.
 My grannie she bought me a beuk,
 An' I held awa to the school ,
 I fear I my talent misteuk,
 But what will ye hae of a fool ?
 For drink I would venture my neck ;
 A hizzie's the half of my craft ;
 But what could ye other expect,
 Of ane that's avowedly daft ?
 I ance was tyed up like a stirk,
 For civilly swearing and quaffing ;
 I ance was abus'd i' the kirk,
 For towsing a lass i' my daffin.
 Poor Andrew that tumbles for sport,
 Let naebody name wi' a jeer ;
 There's even, I'm tauld, i' the Court
 A tumbler ca'd the Premier.

Observ'd ye yon reverend lad
 Mak faces to tickle the mob ;
 He rails at our mountebank squad,—
 It's rivalship just i' the job.

And now my conclusion I'll tell,
 For faith I'm confoundedly dry ;
 The chiel that's a fool for himsel,
 Guid L—d! he's far dafter than I.

Recitativo.

Then niest outspak a raucle carlin,
 Wha kent fu' weel to cleek the sterlin ;
 For monie a pursie she had hooked,
 An' had in mony a well been douked :
 Her love had been a Highland laddie,
 But weary fa' the waefu' woodie ;
 Wi' sighs an' sobs she thus began
 To wail her braw John Highlandman.

Air.

Tune—"O an ye were dead, Guidman."

A Highland lad my love was born,
 The lalland laws he held in scorn ;
 But he still was faithfu' to his clan,
 My gallant, braw John Highlandman.

Chorus.

Sing hey my braw John Highlandman!
 Sing ho my braw John Highlandman!
 There's not a lad in a' the lan'
 Was match for my John Highlandman.

With his philibeg an' tartan plaid,
 An' guid claymore down by his side,
 The ladies' hearts he did trepan,
 My 'gallant, braw John Highlandman.
 Sing hey, etc.

Air.

Tune—"Whistle owre the lave o't."

Let me ryke up to dight that tear,
 An' go wi' me an' be my dear;
 An' then your every care an' fear
 May whistle owre the lave o't.

Chorus.

I am a fiddler to my trade,
 An' a' the tunes that e'er I played,
 The sweetest still to wife or maid,
 Was whistle owre the lave o't.

At kirns an' weddins we'se be there,
 An' O sae nicely's we will fare!
 We'll bowse about till Daddie Care
 Sing whistle owre the lave o't.

I am, etc.

Sae merrily's the banes we'll pyke,
 An' sun oursells about the dyke;
 An' at our leisure, when ye like,
 We'll whistle owre the lave o't.

I am, etc.

But bless me wi' your heav'n o' charms,
 An' while I kittle hair on thairms,
 Hunger, cauld, an' a' sic harms,
 May whistle owre the lave o't.

I am, etc.

Recitativo.

Her charms had struck a sturdy caird,
 As weel as poor gut-scraper;
 He taks the fiddler by the beard,
 An' draws a roosty rapier—
 He swoor by a' was swearing worth,
 Tc speet him like a pliver,
 Unless he would from that time forth
 Relinquish her for ever.

Wi' ghastly e'e, poor tweedle-dee
 Upon his hunkers bended,
 An' pray'd for grace, wi' ruefu' face,
 An' so the quarrel ended.
 But tho' his little heart did grieve
 When round the tinkler prest her,
 He feign'd to snirtle in his sleeve,
 When thus the caird address'd her :

Air.

Tune—"Clout the Cauldron."

My bonie lass, I work in brass,
 A tinkler is my station ;
 I've travell'd round all Christian ground
 In this my occupation ;
 I've taen the gold, an' been enrolled
 In many a noble squadron ;
 But vain they search'd when off I march'd
 To go an' clout the cauldron.
 I've taen the gold, etc.

Despise that shrimp, that wither'd imp,
 With a' his noise an' cap'rin ;
 An' take a share with those that bear
 The budget and the apron !
 And *by* that stowp ! my faith an' houepe,
 And *by* that dear Kilbaigie,
 If e'er ye want, or meet wi' scant,
 May I ne'er weet my craigie
 And by that stowp, etc.

Recitativo.

The caird prevail'd—th' unblushing fair
 In his embraces sank ;
 Partly wi' love o'ercome sae sair,
 An' partly she was drunk :

Sir Violino, with an air
 That show'd a man o' spunk,
 Wish'd unison between the pair,
 An' made the bottle clunk
 To their health that night.

But hurchin Cupid shot a shaft,
 That play'd a dame a shavie—
 The fiddler rak'd her, fore and aft,
 Behint the chicken cavie.
 Her lord, a wight o' Homer's craft,
 Tho' limpin wi' the spavie,
 He hirpl'd up, an' lap like daft,
 An' shor'd them *Dainty Davie*
 O' boot that night.

He was a care-defying blade
 As ever Bacchus listed!
 Tho' Fortune sair upon him laid,
 His heart, she ever miss'd it.
 He had no wish but—to be glad,
 Nor want but—when he thirsted;
 He hated nought but—to be sad,
 An' thus the muse suggested
 His sang that night.

Air.

Tune—"For a' that, an' a' that."

I am a Bard of no regard,
 Wi' gentle folks an' a' that;
 But Homer-like, the glowrin byke,
 Frae town to town I draw that.

Chorus.

For a' that, an' a' that,
 An' twice as muckle's a' that;
 I've lost but ane, I've twa behin',
 I've wife eneugh for a' that.

I never drank the Muses' stank,
 Castalia's burn, an' a' that;
 But there it streams an' richly reams,
 My Helicon I ca' that.
 For a' that, etc.

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
 Their humble slave an' a' that;
 But lordly will, I hold it still
 A mortal sin to thrav that.
 For a' that, etc.

In raptures sweet, this hour we meet,
 Wi' mutual love an' a' that;
 But for how lang the flie may stang,
 Let inclination law that.
 For a' that, etc

Their tricks an' craft hae put me daft,
 They've taen me in, an' a' that;
 But clear your decks, an' here's the Sex!
 I like the jads for a' that.

Chorus.

For a' that, an' a' that,
 An' twice as muckle's a' that;
 My dearest bluid, to do them guid,
 They're welcome till't for a' that.

Recitativo.

So sang the bard—and Nansie's wa's
 Shook with a thunder of applause,
 Re-echo'd from each mouth!
 They toom'd their pocks, they pawn'd their duds,
 They scarcely left to coor their fuds,
 To quench their lowin drowth:
 Then owre again, the jovial thrang
 The poet did request
 To lowse his pack an wale a sang
 A ballad o' the best;

He rising, rejoicing,
 Between his twa Deborahs,
 Looks round him, an' found them
 Impatient for the chorus.

Air.

Tune—"Jolly Mortals, fill your Glasses."

See the smoking bowl before us,
 Mark our jovial ragged ring!
 Round and round take up the chorus,
 And in raptures let us sing—

Chorus.

A fig for those by law protected
 Liberty's a glorious feast!
 Courts for cowards were erected,
 Churches built to please the priest.

What is title, what is treasure,
 What is reputation's care?
 If we lead a life of pleasure,
 'Tis no matter how or where!

A fig for, etc.

With the ready trick and fable,
 Round we wander all the day;
 And at night, in barn or stable,
 Hug our doxies on the hay.

A fig for, etc.

Does the train-attended carriage
 Thro' the country lighter rove?
 Does the sober bed of marriage
 Witness brighter scenes of love?

A fig for, etc.

Life is all a variorum
 We regard not how it goes;
 Let them cant about decorum,
 Who have character to lose.

A fig for, etc.

Here's to budgets, bags and wallets!
 Here's to all the wandering train,
 Here's our ragged brats and callets,
 One and all cry out, Amen!

Chorus.

A fig for those by law protected!
 Liberty's a glorious feast!
 Courts for cowards were erected,
 Churches built to please the priest.

THO' WOMEN'S MINDS.⁴⁹

THO' women's minds, like winter winds,
 May shift, and turn, an' a' that,
 The noblest breast adores them maist—
 A consequence I draw that.

Chorus—For a' that an' a' that,
 And twice as meikle's a' that,
 The bonie lass that I loe best
 She'll be my ain for a' that.

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
 Their humble slave, an' a' that;
 But lordly will, I hold it still
 A mortal sin to thraw that
 For a' that, etc.

But there is ane aboon the lave,
 Has wit, and sense, an' a' that,
 A bonie lass, I like her best,
 And wha a crime dare ca' that?
 For a' that, etc.

In rapture sweet this hour we meet,
 Wi' mutual love an' a' that,
 But for how lang the flie may stang,
 Let inclination law that
 For a' that, etc.

Their tricks an' craft hae put me daft,
 They've taen me in an' a' that;
 But clear your decks, and—here's 'The sex!'
 I like the jads for a' that.
 For a' that, etc.

KISSIN MY KATIE.

Tune—“The bob o' Dumblane.”

O MERRY hae I been teethin a heckle
 An' merry hae I been shapin a spoon;
 O merry hae I been cloutin a kettle,
 An' kissin my Katie when a' was done.
 O a' the lang day I ca' at my hammer,
 An' a' the lang day I whistle and sing;
 O a' the lang night I cuddle my kimmer,
 An' a' the lang night as happy's a king.
 Bitter in dool I lickit my winnins
 O' marrying Bess, to gie her a slave:
 Blest be the hour she cool'd in her linnens,
 And blythe be the bird that sings on her grave!
 Come to my arms, my Katie, my Katie;
 O come to my arms and kiss me again!
 Drucken or sober, here's to thee, Katie!
 An' blest be the day I did it again.

THE COTTAR'S SATURDAY NIGHT.⁵⁰

INSCRIBED TO R. AIKEN, ESQ.

“Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
 Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
 The short and simple annals of the poor.”—GRAY.

My lov'd, my honor'd, much respected friend!
 No mercenary bard his homage pays;
 With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end,
 My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:
 To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,

The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene :

The native feelings strong, the guileless ways ;
 What Aiken in a cottage would have been ,
 Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there I ween!

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh ;

The short'ning winter-day is near a close ;
 The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh ;
 The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose :

The toil-worn Cottar frae his labor goes,—
 This night his weekly moil is at an end,
 Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
 Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
 And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,

Beneath the shelter of an aged tree ;
 Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher through
 To meet their 'dad,' wi' flichterin' noise and glee.
 His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonnie,
 His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
 The lispin' infant, sittin' on his knee,
 Does a' his weary kith and care beguile,
 An' makes him quite forget his labor and his toil.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,

At service out, amang the farmers roun' ;
 Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
 A cannie errand to a neibor town :
 Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman-grown,
 In youthfu' bloom—love sparkling in her e'e—
 Comes hame, perhaps, to show a braw new gown,
 Or deposits her sair-worn penny fee,
 To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

With joy unfeign'd, brothers and sisters meet,

And each for other's welfare kindly spiers :
 The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet ,
 Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears.
 The parents partial eye their hopeful years ;

Anticipation forward points the view ;

The mother, wi' her needle and her sheers
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new ;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's and their mistress's command,

The younkers a' are warned to obey ;
And mind their labors wi' an eydent hand,
And ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play ;

" And O ! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
And mind your duty, duly, morn and night ;
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might :
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright."

But hark ! a rap comes gently to the door ;

Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neibor lad came o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.

The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek ;
With heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny haffins is afraid to speak ;
Weel-pleased the mother hears, it's nae wild, worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben ;

A strappin' youth, he takes the mother's eye ;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en ;

The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate an' laithfu', scarce can weel behave ;

The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae grave ;
Weel-pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like the lave.

O happy love ! where love like this is found :

O heart-felt raptures ! bliss beyond compare !

I've paced much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare,—

" If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare—

One cordial in this melancholy vale,
 'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair
 In other's arms, breathe out the tender tale,
 Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the evening gale "

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
 A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
 That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
 Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
 Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling, smooth!
 Are honor, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?

Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
 Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
 Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild?

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
 The halesome parritch, chief of Scotia's food;
 The sowpe their only hawkie does afford,
 That, 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood:
 The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
 To grace the lad, her well-ham'd kebbuck, fell;
 And aft he's prest, and aft he ca's it guid:
 The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell
 How 'twas a twomond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
 They, round the ingle, form a circle wide,
 The sire turns o'er, with patriarchal grace,
 The big ha'-bible, ance his father's pride:
 His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
 His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare;
 Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
 He wales a portion with judicious care;
 And "Let us worship God!" he says with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise,
 They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim;
 Perhaps 'Dundee's' wild-warbling measures rise,
 Or plaintive 'Martyrs,' worthy of the name;
 Or noble 'Elgin' beets the heavenward flame,

The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays :

Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame ;
The tickl'd ears no heart-felt raptures raise ;
Nae unison hae they, with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high ;

Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage

With Amalek's ungracious progeny ;

Or, how the royal bard did groaning lie

Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire ;

Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry ;

Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire ;

Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,

How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed ;

How He, who bore in Heaven the second name,

Had not on earth whereon to lay His head :

How His first followers and servants sped ;

The precepts sage they wrote to many a land :

How he, who lone in Patmos banish'd,

Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,

And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd by Heaven's
command.

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King,

The saint, the father, and the husband prays :

Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"

That thus they all shall meet in future days,

There, ever bask in uncreated rays,

No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,

Together hymning their Creator's praise,

In such society, yet still more dear ;

While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

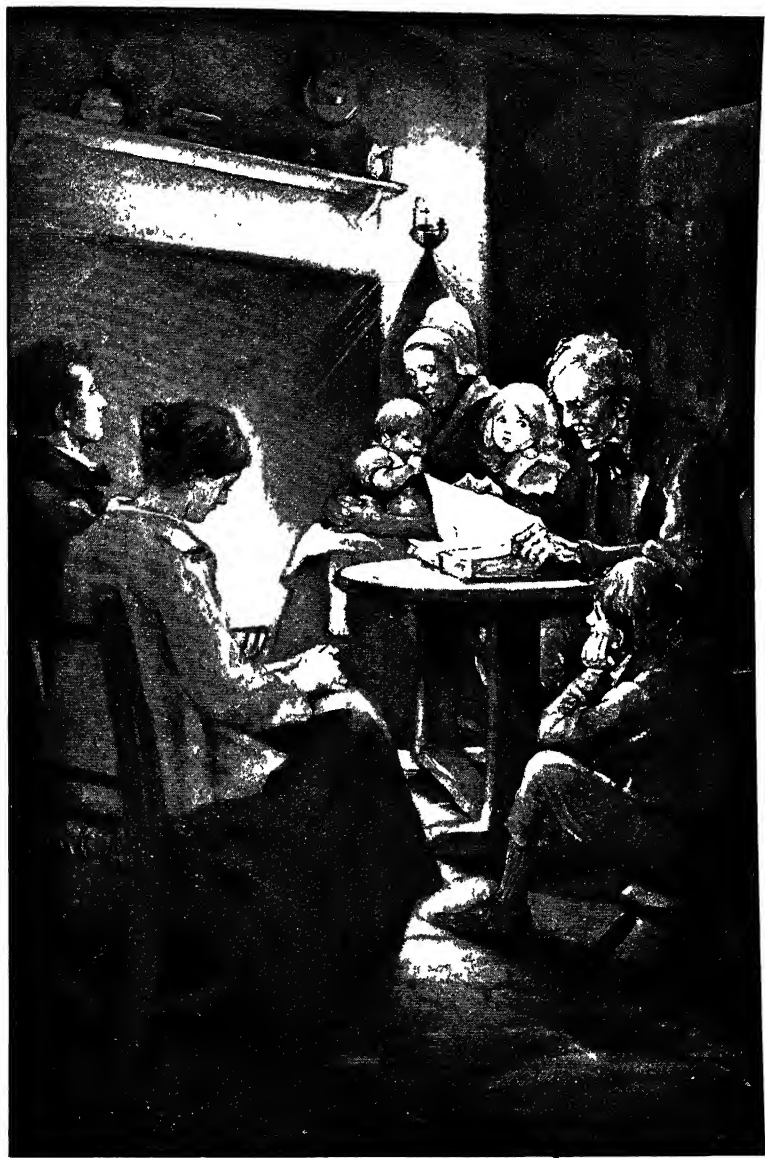
Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,

In all the pomp of method, and of art ;

When men display to congregations wide

Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart !

The Power, incens'd, the pageant will desert,



BU.

"The sire turns o'er, with patriarchal giace,
The big ha'-bible, ance his fater's pride"

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The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole ;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well-pleas'd, the language of the soul ;
And in His Book of Life the inmates poor enroll

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way ;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest :
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide ,
But chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad :
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
" An honest man's the noblest work of God ;"
And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind ;
What is a lordling's pomp ? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd !

O Scotia ! my dear, my native soil !
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent,
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content !
And O ! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile !
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd isle.

O Thou ! who pour'd the patriotic tide,
That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart,
Who dar'd to, nobly, stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part :
(The patriot's God, peculiarly thou art,

His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!
 O never, never Scotia's realm desert;
 But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard
 In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.⁵¹

"O Prince! O chief of many thronèd pow'rs
 That led th' embattl'd seraphim to war."—MILTON.

O THOU! whatever title suit thee—
 Auld "Hornie," "Satan," "Nick," or "Clootie,"
 Wha in yon cavern grim an' sootie,
 Clos'd under hatches,
 Spairges about the brunstane cootie,
 To scaud poor wretches!

Hear me, auld "Hangie," for a wee,
 An' let poor damnèd bodies be;
 I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
 Ev'n to a deil,
 To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me,
 An' hear us squeel!

Great is thy pow'r an' grèat thy fame;
 Far kenn'd an' notèd is thy name;
 An' tho' yon lowin heuch's thy hame,
 Thou travels far;
 An' faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
 Nor blate, nor scaur.

Whyles, ranging like a roarin lion,
 For prey, a' holes an' corners tryin;
 Whyles, on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin'
 Tirlin the kirks;
 Whyles, in the human bosom pryin,
 Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my rev'rend grannie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray,
Or where auld run'd castles grey

Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,
Wi' eldnitch croon.

When twilight did my grannie summon,
To say her pray'rs, douse, honest woman!
Aft 'yont the dyke she's heard you bummin,
Wi' eerie drone;

Or, rustlin, thro' the boortrees comin,
Wi' heavy groan

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentín light,
Wi' you mysel, I gat a fright,
Ayont the lough;

Ye, like a rash-buss, stood in sight,
Wi' waving sough.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldnitch, stoor "quaick, quaick,"
Amang the springs,

Awa ye squatter'd like a drake,
On whistlin wings

Let warlocks grim, an' wither'd hags,
Tell how wi' you, on ragweed nags,
They skim the muirs an' dizzy crags,
Wi' wicked speed;

And in kirkyards renew their leagues,
Owre howket dead.

Thence, countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,
May plunge an' plunge the kirm in vain;
For oh! the yellow treasure's ta'en
By witchin skill;

An' dawtet, twal-pint 'hawkie's' gane
As yell's the bill.

Thence, mystic knots mak great abuse
 On young guidmen, fond, keen an' croose ;
 When the best wark-lume i' the house,

By cantraip wit,
 Is instant made no worth a louse,
 Just at the bit.

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
 An' float the junglin icy boord,
 Then, water-kelpies haunt the foord,

By your direction,
 And 'nighted trav'lers are allur'd
 To their destruction

And aft your moss-traversin " Spunkies "
 Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is :
 The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkies

Delude his eyes,
 Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
 Ne'er mair to rise.

When masons' mystic word an' grip
 In storms an' tempests raise you up,
 Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,

Or, strange to tell!
 The youngest " brither " ye wad whip
 Aff straught to hell.

Lang syne in Eden's bonie yard,
 When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
 An' all the soul of love they shar'd,

The raptur'd hour—
 Sweet on the fragrant flow'ry swaird,
 In shady bow'r ;

Then you, ye auld, snick-drawing dog !
 Ye came to Paradise incog,

An' play'd on man a cursed brogue,
 (Black be your fa' !)

An' gied the infant warld a shog,
 'Maist ruin'd a'.

D'ye mind that day when in a bizz
Wi' reeket duds, an' reestet gizz,
Ye did present your smootie phiz
 'Mang better folk,
An' sklentend on the man of Uzz
 Your spitefu' joke?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
An' brak him out o' house an' hal',
While scabs an' botches did him gall,
 Wi' bitter claw;
An' lows'd his ill-tongu'd wicked scaull—
 Was warst ava?

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares an' fechtin fierce,
Sin' that day Michael did you pierce,
 Down to this time,
Wad ding a Lallan tongue, or Erse,
 In prose or rhyme.

An' now, auld "Cloots," I ken ye're thinkin,
A certain bardie's rantin, drinkin,
Some luckless hour will send him linkin
 To your black pit;
But, faith! he'll turn a corner jnikin,
 An' cheat you yet.

But fare-you-weel, auld "Nickie-ben!"
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
 Still hae a stake:
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
 Ev'n for your sake!

Food fills the wame, an' keeps us leevin',
 Tho' life's a gift no worth receivin',
 When heavy-lagg'd wi' pine an' grievin';

But oil'd by thee,
 The wheels o' life gae down-hill, screevin',
 Wi' rattlin glee.

Thou clears the head o' doited Lear;
 Thou cheers the heart o' drooping Care;
 Thou strings the nerves o' Labor sair,

At 's weary toil,
 Thou ev'n brightens dark Despair
 Wi' gloomy smile.

Aft, clad in massy siller weed,
 Wi' gentles thou erects thy head;
 Yet, humbly kind in time o' need,

The poor man's wine;
 His wee drap parritch, or his bread;
 Thou kitchens fine.

Thou art the life o' public haunts;
 But thee, what were our fairs and rants?
 Ev'n godly meetings o' the saunts,

By thee inspir'd,
 When, gaping, they besiege the tents,
 Are doubly fir'd.

That merry night we get the corn in,
 O sweetly, then, thou reams the horn in!
 Or reekin on a New-year mornin'

In cog or bicker,
 An' just a wee drap sp'ritual burn in,
 An' gusty sucker!

When Vulcan gies his bellows breath,
 An' ploughman gather wi' their graith,
 O rare! to see thee fizz an' freath

I' th' lugget caup!
 Then Burnewin comes on like death
 At every chaup.

Nae mercy, then, for airn or steel;
The brawnie, bainie, ploughman chiel,
Brings hard owrehip, wi' sturdy wheel,
The strong forehammer,
Till block an' studdie ring an' reel,
Wi' dinsome clamour.

When skirlin weanies see the light,
Thou maks the gossips clatter bright,
How fumblin cuifs their dearies slight;
Wae worth the name!
Nae howdie gets a social night,
Or plack frae them.

When neibors anger at a plea,
An' just as wud as wud can be,
How easy can the barley brie
Cement the quarrel!
It's aye the cheapest lawyer's fee,
To taste the barrel.

Alake! that e'er my muse has reason,
To wyte her countrymen wi' treason!
But mony daily weet their weason
Wi' liquors nice,
An' hardly, in a winter season,
E'er spier her price.

Wae worth that brandy, burnin trash!
Fell source o' mony a pain an' brash!
Twins mony a poor, doylt, drucken hash,
O' half his days;
An' sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash
To her warst faes.

Ye Scots, wha wish auld Scotland well!
Ye chief, to you my tale I tell,
Poor, plackless devils like mysel!
It sets you ill,
Wi' bitter, dearthfu' wines to mell,
Or foreign gill.

May gravels round his blather wench,
An' gouts torment him, inch by inch,
Wha twists his gruntle wi' a glunch
O' sour disdain,
Out owre a glass o' whisky-punch
Wi' honest men!

O whisky! soul o' plays an' pranks!
Accept a bardie's gratefu' thanks!
When wanting thee, what tuneless cranks
Are my poor verses!
Thou comes—they rattle i' their ranks,
At ither's a—s!

Thee, Ferintosh! O sadly lost!
Scotland lament frae coast to coast!
Now colic grips, an' barkin hoast
May kill us a';
For loyal Forbes' charter'd boast
Is ta'en awa!

Thae curst horse-leeches o' th' Excise,
Wha mak the whisky stells their prize!
Haud up thy han', Deil! ance, twice, thrice!
There, seize the blinkers!
An' bake them up in brunstane pics
For poor d—n'd drinkers.

Fortune! if thou'll but gie me still
Hale breeks, a scone, an' whisky gill,
An' rowth o' rhyme to rave at will,
Tak a' the rest,
An' deal't about as thy blind skill
Directs thee best.

THE AULD FARMER'S NEW-YEAR MORNING SALU-
TATION TO HIS AULD MARE, MAGGIE,⁵³ON GIVING HER THE ACCUSTOMED RIPP OF CORN TO HANSEL
IN THE NEW-YEAR.

A GUID New-year I wish thee, Maggie!
Hae, there's a ripp to thy auld baggie:
Tho' thou's howe-backit now, an' knaggie,
I've seen the day
Thou could hae gaen like ony staggie,
Out-owre the lay.

Tho' now thou's dowie, stiff an' crazy,
An' thy auld hide as white's a daisie,
I've seen thee dappl't, sleek an' glaizie,
A bonie gray:
He should been tight that daur't to raize thee,
Ance in a day.

Thou ance was i' the foremost rank,
A filly buirdly, steeve an' swank;
An' set weel down a shapely shank,
As e'er tread yird;
An' could hae flown out-owre a stank,
Like ony bird.

It's now some nine-an'-twenty year,
Sin' thou was my guid-father's meere;
He gied me thee, o' tocher clear,
An' fifty mark;
Tho' it was sma', 'twas weel-won gear,
An' thou was stark.

When first I gaed to woo my Jenny,
Ye then were trottin' wi' your minnie:
Tho' ye was trickie, slee, an' funnie,
Ye ne'er was donsie;
But hamely, tawie, quiet, an' cannie,
An' unco sonsie.

That day, ye pranc'd wi' muckle pride,
When ye bure hame my bonie bride :

An' sweet an' gracefu' she did ride,
Wi' maiden air !

Kyle-Stewart I could bragget wide,
For sic a pair.

Tho' now ye dow but hoyte and hobble,
An' wintle like a saumont-coble,

That day, ye was a junker noble,
For heels an' win' !

An' ran them till they a' did wauble,
Far, far, behin' !

When thou an' I were young an' skeigh,
An' stable-meals at fair, were driegh,
How thou wad prance, an' snore, an' skreigh
An' tak the road !

Town's-bodies ran, an' stood abiegh,
An' ca't thee mad

When thou was corn't, an' I was mellow,
We took the road ay like a swallow :
At brooses thou had ne'er a fellow,
For pith an' speed ;
But ev'ry tail thou pay't them hollow,
Where'er thou gaed

The sma', droop-rumpl't, hunter cattle
Might aiblins waur't thee for a brattle ,
But sax Scotch mile, thou try't their mettle,
An' gar't them whaizle :

Nae whip nor spur, but just a wattle
O' saugh or hazle.

Thou was a noble 'fittie-lan',
As e'er in tug or tow was drawn !
Aft thee an' I, in aught hours' gaun,
On guid March-weather,
Hae turn'd sax rood beside our han',
For days thegither

Thou never braing't, an' fetch't, an' flisket ;
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whisket,
An' spread abreed thy well-fill'd brisket,
 Wi' pith an' power ;
Till sprittie knowes wad rair't an' risket
 An' slypet owre.

When frosts lay lang, an' snaws were deep,
An' threaten'd labour back to keep,
I gied thy cog a wee bit heap
 Aboon the timmer :
I ken'd my Maggie wad na sleep,
 For that, or simmer.

In cart or car thou never reested ,
The steyst brae thou wad hae fac't it ;
Thou never lap, an' stenned, and breastet,
 Then stood to blaw ;
But just thy step a wee thing hastet,
 Thou snoov't awa.

My "pleugh" is now thy bairn-time a',
Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw ;
Forbye sax mae I've sell't awa,
 That thou hast nurst :
They drew me thretteen pund an' twa,
 The vera warst.

Mony a sair daurg we twa hae wrought,
An' wi' the weary warl' fought!
An' mony an anxious day, I thought
 We wad be beat !
Yet here to crazy age we're brought,
 Wi' something yet.

An' think na', my auld trusty servan',
That now perhaps thou's less deservin',
An' my auld days may end in starvin ;
 For my last fow,
A heapet stimpert, I'll reserve ane
 Laid by for you.

We've worn to crazy years thegither ;
 We'll toyte about wi' ane anither ;
 Wi' tentie care I'll flit thy tether
 To some hain'd rig,
 Whare ye may nobly rax your leather,
 Wi' sma' fatigue.

THE TWA DOGS.⁵⁴

A TALE.

'Twas in that place o' Scotland's isle,
 That bears the name o' auld "King Coil,"
 Upon a bonie day in June,
 When wearin thro' the afternoon,
 Twa dogs, that were na thrang at hame,
 Forgather'd ance upon a time.

The first I'll name, they ca'd him "Cæsar,"
 Was keepet for "his Honor's" pleasure :
 His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,
 Shew'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs ;
 But whalpet some place far abroad,
 Whare sailors gang to fish for cod.

His lockèd, letter'd, braw brass collar
 Shew'd him the gentleman an' scholar ;
 But though he was o' high degree,
 The fient a pride, nae pride had he ;
 But wad hae spent an hour caressin,
 Ev'n wi' a tinkler-gipse's messan :
 At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,
 Nae tawted tyke, tho' e'er sae duddie,
 But he wad stand, as glad to see him,
 An' stroan'd on stanes an' hillocks wi' him.

The tither was a ploughman's collie—
 A rhyming, ranting, raving billie,
 Wha for his friend an' comrade had him,
 And in his freaks had "Luath" ca'd him,
 After some dog in Highland sang,
 Was made lang syne—Lord knows how lang.

He was a gash an' faithfu' tyke,
 As ever lap a sheugh or dyke.
 His honest, sonsie, baws'nt face
 Ay gat him friends in ilka place ;
 His breast was white, his tousie back
 Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black ;
 His gawsie tail, wi' upward curl,
 Hung owre his hurdies wi' a swirl.

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,
 And unco pack an' thick thegither ,
 Wi' social nose whyles snuff'd an' snowket ;
 Whyles mice an' moudieworts they howket ;
 Whyles scour'd awa' in lang excursion,
 An' worry'd ither in diversion ,
 Till tir'd at last wi' mony a farce,
 They set them down upon their arse,
 An' there began a lang digression
 About the " lords o' the creation."

CÆSAR.

I've aften wonder'd, honest Luath,
 What sort o' life poor dogs like you have ;
 An' when the gentry's life I saw,
 What way poor bodies liv'd ava.

Our laird gets in his rackèd rents,
 His coals, his kane, an' a' his stents :
 He rises when he likes himsel ;
 His flunkies answer at the bell ;
 He ca's his coach ; he ca's his horse ;
 He draws a bonie silken purse,
 As lang's my tail, where, thro' the steeks,
 The yellow letter'd Geordie keeks.

Frae morn to e'en it's nought but toiling,
 At baking, roasting, frying, boiling ;
 An' tho' the gentry first are stechin,
 Yet ey'n the ha' folk fill their pechan
 Wi' sauce, ragouts, an' sic like trashtrie
 That's little short o' downright wastrie.

Our whipper-in, wee, blasted wonner,
 Poor, worthless elf, it eats a dinner,
 Better than ony tenant-man
 His Honour has in a' the lan':
 An' what poor cot-folk pit their painch in,
 I own it's past my comprehension.

LUATH

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they're fash't eneugh:
 A cottar howkin in a sheugh,
 Wi' dirty stanes biggin' a dyke,
 Baring a quarry, an' sic like;
 Himsel, a wife, he thus sustains,
 A smytie o' wee duddie weans,
 An' nought but his han'-daurg, to keep
 Them right an' tight in thack an' raep.

An' when they meet wi' sair disasters,
 Like loss o' health, or want o' masters,
 Ye maist wad think, a wee touch langer,
 An' they maun starve o' cauld an' hunger:
 But how it comes, I never kent yet,
 They're maistly wonderfu' contented;
 An' buirdly chiels, an' clever hizzies,
 Are bred in sic a way as this is.

CÆSAR.

But then to see how ye're neglecket,
 How huff'd, an' cuff'd, an' disrespecket!
 L—d man, our gentry care as little
 For delvers, ditchers, an' sic cattle;
 They gang as saucy by poor folk,
 As I wad by a stinking brock

I've notic'd, on our laird's court-day—
 An' mony a time my heart's been wae,—
 Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
 How they maun thole a factor's snash;
 He'll stamp an' threaten, curse an' swear
 He'll apprehend them, poind their gear;

While they maun stan', wi' aspect humble,
An' hear it a', an' fear an' tremble!

I see how folk live that hae riches;
But surely poor-folk maun be wretches!

LUATH.

They're no sae wretched 's ane wad think.
Tho' constantly on poortith's brink,
They're sae accustom'd wi' the sight,
The view o't gies them little fright.

Then chance and fortune are sae guided,
They're ay in less or mair provided;
An' tho' fatigu'd wi' close employment,
A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.

The dearest comfort o' their lives,
Their grushie weans an' faithfu' wives;
The prattling things are just their pride,
That sweetens a' their fireside.

An' whyles twalpennie worth o' nappy
Can mak the bodies unco happy:
They lay aside their private cares,
To mind the Kirk and State affairs;
They'll talk o' patronage an' priests,
Wi' kindling fury i' their breasts,
Or tell what new taxation's comin,
An' ferlie at the folk in Lon'on.

As bleak-fac'd Hallowmass returns,
They get the jovial, rantin kirns,
When rural life, of ev'ry station,
Unite in common recreation;
Love blinks, Wit slaps, an' social Mirth
Forgets there's Care upo' the earth.

That merry day the year begins,
They bar the door on frosty win's;
The nappy reeks wi' mantling ream,
An' sheds a heart-inspiring steam;
The luntin pipe, an' sneeshin mill,
Are handed round wi' right guid will;

The cantie auld folks crackin crouse,
 The young anes ranting thro' the house—
 My heart has been sae fain to see them,
 That I for joy hae barked wi' them.

Still it's owre true that ye hae said,
 Sic game is now owre aften play'd;
 There's mony a creditable stock
 O' decent, honest, fawsont folk,
 Are riven out baith root an' branch,
 Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench,
 Wha thinks to knit himsel the faster
 In favour wi' some gentle master,
 Wha, aiblins thrang a parliamentin',
 For Britain's guid his saul indentin'—

CÆSAR.

Haith, lad, ye little ken about it:
 For Britain's guid! guid faith! I doubt it.
 Say rather, gaun as Premiers lead him:
 An' saying aye or no's they bid him:
 At operas an' plays parading,
 Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading:
 Or maybe, in a frolic daft,
 To Hague or Calais takes a waft,
 To mak a tour an' tak a whirl,
 To learn *bon ton*, an' see the worl'.

There, at Vienna, or Versailles,
 He rives his father's auld entails;
 Or by Madrid he takes the rout,
 To thrum guitars an' fecht wi' nowt;
 Or down Italian vista startles,
 Wh-re-hunting amang groves o' myrtles:
 Then bowses drumlie German-water,
 To mak himsel look fair an' fatter,
 An' clear the consequential sorrows,
 Love-gifts of Carnival signoras.

For Britain's guid! for her destruction!
 Wi' dissipation, feud an' faction.

LUATH.

Hech man! dear sirs! is that the gate
 They waste sae mony a braw estate!
 Are we sae foughthen an' harrass'd
 For gear to gang that gate at last?

O would they stay aback frae courts,
 An' please themsels wi' countra sports,
 It wad for ev'ry ane be better,
 The laird, the tenant, an' the cottar!
 For thae frank, rantin', ramblin' billies,
 Feint haet o' them's ill-hearted fellows;
 Except for breakin' o' their timmer,
 Or speakin' lightly o' their limmer,
 Or shootin' o' a hare or moor-cock,
 The ne'er-a-bit they're ill to poor folk,

But will ye tell me, master Cæsar,
 Sure great folk's life's a life o' pleasure?
 Nae cauld nor hunger e'er can steer them,
 The very thought o't need na fear them.

CÆSAR.

L—d, man, were ye but whyles whare I am,
 The gentles, ye wad ne'er envy them!

It's true, they need na starve or sweat,
 Thro' winter's cauld, or simmer's heat;
 They've nae sair-wark to craze their banes,
 An' fill auld age wi' grips an' granes,
 But human bodies are sic fools,
 For a' their colleges an' schools,
 That when nae real ills perplex them,
 They mak enow themsels to vex them;
 An' aye the less they hae to sturt them,
 In like proportion, less will hurt them.

A country fellow at the pleugh,
 His acre's till'd, he's right enough;
 A country girl at her wheel,
 Her dizzen's dune, she's unco weel;

But gentlemen, an' ladies warst,
Wi' ev'n-down want o' wark are curst.
They loiter, lounging, lank an' lazy ;
Tho' deil-haet ails them, yet uneasy :
Their days insipid, dull an' tasteless ;
Their nights unquiet, lang an' restless.

An' ev'n their sports, their balls an' races,
Their galloping through public places,
There's sic parade, sic pomp an' art,
The joy can scarcely reach the heart.

The men cast out in party-matches,
Then sowther a' in deep debauches.
Ae night they're mad wi' drink an wh-ring,
Niest day their life is past enduring.

The ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
As great an' gracious a' as sisters ;
But hear their absent thoughts o' ither,
They're a' run deils an jads thegither
Whyles, owre the wee bit cup an plaitie,
They sip the scandal-potion pretty ;
Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbet leuks
Pore owre the devil's pictur'd beuks ;
Stake on a chance a farmer's stackyard,
An' cheat like ony unhang'd blackguard.

There's some exceptions, man an' woman ;
But this is gentry's life in common.

By this, the sun was out of sight,
An' darker gloamin brought the night ,
The bum-clock humm'd wi' lazy drone ;
The kye stood rowtin i' the loan ,
When up they gat an' shook their lugs,
Rejoic'd they were na *men* but *dogs* ;
An' each took aff his several way,
Resolv'd to meet some ither day.

THE AUTHOR'S EARNEST CRY AND PRAYER ⁵⁵
 TO THE SCOTCH REPRESENTATIVES IN THE HOUSE
 OF COMMONS.

Dearest of distillation ! last and best—
 . . . How art thou lost !—PARODY ON MILTON.

YE Irish lords, ye knights an' squires,
 Wha represent our brughs an' shires,
 An' doucely manage our affairs
 In parliament,
 To you a simple poet's pray'rs
 Are humbly sent.

Alas ! my roupet muse is hearse !
 Your Honors' hearts wi' grief 'twad pierce,
 To see her sittin on her arse
 Low i' the dust,
 And sciechin out prosaic verse,
 An' like to burst !

Tell them wha hae the chief direction,
 Scotland an' me's in great affliction,
 E'er sin' they laid that curst restriction
 On aqua-vitæ ;
 An' rouse them up to strong conviction,
 An' move their pity.

Stand forth, an tell yon Premier youth
 The honest, open, naked truth :
 Tell him o' mine an' Scotland's drouth,
 His servants humble :
 The muckle deevil blaw you south,
 If ye dissemble !

Does ony great man glunch an' gloom ?
 Speak out, an' never fash your thumb !
 Let posts an' pensions sink or soom
 Wi' them wha grant them ;
 If honestly they canna come,
 Far better want them.

In gath'rin votes you were na slack ;
Now stand as tightly by your tack :
Ne'er claw your lug, an' fidge your back,
An' hum an' haw ;
But raise your arm, an' tell your crack
Before them a'.

Paint Scotland greetin owre her thrissle ;
Her mutchkin stowp as toom's a whussle ;
An' d—mn'd excisemen in a bussle,
 Seizin a stell,
Triumphant, crushin't like a mussel,
 Or limpet shell!

Then, on the tither hand, present her—
A blackguard smuggler right behind her,
An' cheek-for-chow, a chuffie vintner
Colleaguin' join,
Pickin' her pouch as bare as winter
Of a' kind coin.

Is there, that bears the name o' Scot,
But feels his heart's bluid rising hot,
To see his poor auld mither's pot
Thus dung in staves,
An' plunder'd o' her hindmost groat,
By gallows knaves?

Alas! I'm but a nameless wight,
Trode i' the mire out o' sight?
But could I like Montgomeries fight,
Or gab like Boswell,
There's some sark-necks I wad draw tight,
An' tie some hose well.

God bless your Honors ! can ye see't—
The kind, auld, cantie carlin greet,
An' no get warmly to your feet,
An' gar them hear it,
An' tell them wi' a patriot-heat,
Ye winna bear it ?

Some o' you nicely ken the laws,
 To round the period an' pause,
 An' with rhetoric clause on clause
 To mak harangues ;
 Then echo thro' Saint Stephen's wa's
 Auld Scotland's wrangs.

Dempster, a true blue Scot I'se warran ;
 Thee, aith-detesting, chaste Kilkerran ;
 An' that glib-gabbet Highland baron,
 The Laird o' Graham ,
 An' ane, a chap that's d—mn'd auldfarran,
 Dundas his name :

Erskine, a spunkie Norland billie ;
 True Campbells, Frederick and Ilay ;
 An' Livistone, the bauld Sir Willie ;
 An' mony ithers,
 Whom auld Demosthenes or Tully
 Might own for brithers.

See, sodger Hugh, my watchman stented,
 If poets e'er are represented ;
 I ken if that your sword were wanted,
 Ye'd lend a hand ;
 But when there's ought to say anent it,
 Ye're at a stand.

Arouse, my boys ! exert your mettle,
 To get auld Scotland back her kettle ;
 Or faith ! I'll wad my new pleugh-pettle,
 Ye'll see't or lang,
 She'll teach you, wi' a reekin' whittle,
 Anither sang.

This while she's been in crankous mood,
 Her lost Militia fir'd her bluid ;
 (Deil nor they never mair do guid,
 Play'd her that pliskie !)
 An' now she's like to rin red wud
 About her whisky.

An' L—d! if ance they pit her till't,
Her tartan petticoat she'll kilt,
An' durk an' pistol at her belt,
She'll tak the streets,
An' rin her whittle to the hilt,
I' the first she meets!

For G—d-sake, sirs! then speak her fair,
An' straik her kannie wi' the hair,
An' to the muckle house repair,
 Wi' instant speed,
An' strive, wi' a' your wit an' lear,
 To get remead.

Yon ill-tongu'd tinkler, Charlie Fox
May taunt you wi' his jeers and mocks,
But gie him't het, my hearty cocks!
E'en cove the cadie!
An' send him to his dicing box
An' sportin' lady.

Tell yon guid bluid o' auld Boconnock's,
I'll be his debt twa mashlum bonnocks,
An' drink his health in auld Nanse Tinnock's
Nine times a-week,
If he some scheme, like tea an' winnocks,
Wad kindly seek.

Could he some commutation broach,
I'll pledge my aith in guid braid Scotch,
He needna fear their foul reproach
Nor erudition,
Yon mixtie-maxtie, queer hotch-potch,
The "Coalition."

Auld Scotland has a raucle tongue ;
She's just a devil wi' a rung ;
An' if she promise auld or young
To tak their part,
Tho' by the neck she would be strung,
She'll no desert.

Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings tease him ;
 Death comes, wi' fearless eye he sees him ;
 Wi' bluddy hand a welcome gies him ;

An' when he fa's,
 His latest draught o' breathin' lea'es him
 In faint huzzas.

Sages their solemn een may steek,
 An' raise a philosophic reek,
 An' physically causes seek,
 In clime an' season ;
 But tell me whisky's name in Greek,
 I'll tell the reason.

Scotland, my auld, respected mither !
 Tho' whiles ye moistify your leather,
 Till, whare ye sit on craps o' heather,
 Ye tine your dam ;
 Freedom an' whisky gang thegither !
 Tak aff your dram.

THE ORDINATION.⁵⁶

"For sense, they little owe to frugal Heav'n—
 To please the mob they hide the little giv'n."

KILMARNOCK wabsters, fidge and claw,
 An' pour your creeshie nations ;
 An' ye wha leather rax an' draw,
 Of a' denominations ;
 Swith ! to the Laigh Kirk, ane an' a',
 An' there tak up your stations ,
 Then aff to Begbie's in a raw,
 An' pour divine libations
 For joy this day.

Curst "Common-sense," that imp o' h-ll,
 Cam in wi' Maggie Lauder :
 But Oliphant aft made her yell,
 An' Russell sair misca'd her :

This day Mackinlay taks the flail,
An' he's the boy will blaud her!
He'll clap a shangan on her tail,
An' set the bairns to daud her
Wi' dirt this day.

Mak haste an' turn King David owre,
And lilt wi' holy clangor;
O' double verse come gie us four,
An' skirl up "the Bangor:"
This day the kirk kicks up a stoure,
Nae mair the knaves shall wrang her;
For Heresy is in her pow'r,
And gloriously she'll whang her,
Wi' pith this day.

Come, let a proper text be read,
An' touch it aff wi' vigour,
How graceless Ham leugh at his dad,
Which made Canaan a nigger;
Or Phineas drove the murdering blade,
Wi' whore-abhorring rigour;
Or Zipporah, the scauldin jad,
Was like a bluidy teeger,
I' th' inn that day.

There, try his mettle on the creed,
And bind him down wi' caution,—
That stipend is a carnal weed
He taks but for the fashion;—
And gie him o'er the flock to feed,
And punish each transgression;
Especial, rams that cross the breed,
Gie them sufficient threshin;
Spare them nae day.

Now auld Kilmarnock, cock thy tail,
An' toss thy horns fu' canty;
Nae mair thou'lt rowte out-owre the dale,
Because thy pasture's scanty;

For lapfu's large o' gospel kail
 Shall fill thy crib in plenty,
 An' runts o' grace the pick an' wale,
 No g'ien by way o' dainty,
 But ilka day.

Nae mair by "Babel's streams" we'll weep,
 To think upon our "Zion;"
 And hing our fiddles up to sleep,
 Like baby-clouts a-dryin!
 Come, screw the pegs wi' tunefu' cheep,
 And o'er the thairms be tryin;
 Oh, rare! to see our elbuck's wheep,
 And a' like lamb-tails flyin,
 Fu' fast this day!

Lang Patronage, wi' rod o' aim,
 Has shor'd the Kirk's undoin;
 As lately Fenwick, sair forfairn,
 Has proven to its ruin.
 Our patron, honest man! Glencairn,
 He saw mischief was brewin;
 An' like a godly, elect bairn,
 He's waled us out a true ane,
 And sound this day

Now Ro'ert-en-hara gae nae mair,
 But steek your gab for ever;
 Or try the wicked town of Ayr,
 For there they'll think you clever;
 Or, nae reflection on your lear,
 Ye may commence a shaver;
 Or to the Netherton repair,
 An' turn a carpet weaver,
 Aff-hand this day.

Mu'trie and you were just a match,
 We never had sic twa drones;
 Auld "Hornie" did the Laigh Kirk watch,
 Just like a winkin baudrons,

And ay he catch'd the tither wretch,
To fry them in his caudrons ,
But now his Honor maun detach,
Wi' a' his brimstone squadrons,
Fast, fast this day.

See, see auld Orthodoxy's faes
She's swingein thro' the city!
Hark, how the nine-tail'd cat she plays!
I vow it's unco pretty:
There, Learning, with his Greekish face,
Grunts out some Latin ditty ;
And "Common-sense" is gaun, she says,
To mak to Jamie Beattie
Her plaint this day.

But there's Morality himsel
Embracing all opinions ;
Hear, how he gies the tither yell,
Between his twa companions!
See, how she peels the skin an' fell,
As ane was peelin onions!
Now there, they're packèd aff to h-ll,
An' banish'd our dominions,
Henceforth this day.

O happy day! rejoice, rejoice!
Come bouse about the porter!
Morality's demure decoys
Shall here nae mair find quarter :
Mackinlay, Russell, are the boys
That heresy can torture ;
They'll gie her on a rape a hoyse,
And cove her measure shorter
By th' head some day.

Come, bring the tither mutchkin in,
And here's—for a conclusion—
To ev'ry "new-light" mother's son,
From this time forth, confusion!

If mair they deave us wi' their din,
Or patronage intrusion,
We'll hight a spunk, and ev'ry skin,
We'll rin them aff in fusion,
Like oil some day.

EPISTLE TO JAMES SMITH.⁵⁷

“Friendship, mysterious cement of the soul !
Sweet’ner of Life, and solder of Society !
I owe thee much——” —BLAIR.

DEAR SMITH, the slee'st, pawkie thief,
That e'er attempted stealth or rief!
Ye surely hae some warlock-breef
Owre human hearts:
For ne'er a bosom yet was prief
Against your arts.

For me, I swear by sun an' moon,
An' ev'ry star that blinks aboon,
Ye've cost me twenty pair o' shoon,
 Just gaun to see you ;
An' ev'ry ither pair that's done,
 Mair taen I'm wi' you.

That auld, capricious carlin, Nature,
To mak amends for scrimpet stature,
She's turn'd you aff, a human-creature
On her first plan,
And in her freaks, on ev'ry feature
She's wrote the Man.

Just now I've taen the fit o' rhyme,
My barmie noddle's working prime.
My fancy yerket up sublime,
Wi' hasty summon ;
Hae ye a leisure-moment's time
To hear what's comin' ?

Some rhyme a neighbor's name to lash ;
Some rhyme (vain thought!) for needfu' cash ;
Some rhyme to court the countra clash,

 An' raise a din ;
For me, an aim I never fash ,
 I rhyme for fun.

The star that rules my luckless lot,
Has fated me the russet coat,
An' damn'd my fortune to the groat ;
 But, in requit,
Has blest me with a random-shot
 O' countra wit.

This while my notion's taen a sklent,
To try my fate in guid, black prent ;
But still the mair I'm that way bent,
 Something cries "Hoohe!

I red you, honest man, tak tent!
 Ye'll shaw your folly ;

There's ither poets, much your betters,
Far seen in Greek, deep men o' letters,
Hae thought they had ensur'd their debtors,
 A' future ages ;

Now moths deform, in shapeless tatters,
 Their unknown pages."

Then farewell hopes of laurel-boughs,
To garland my poetic brows!
Henceforth I'll rove where busy ploughs
 Are whistlin thrang,
An' teach the lanely heights an' howes
 My rustic sang.

I'll wander on, wi' tentless heed
How never-halting moments speed,
Till fate shall snap the brittle thread ;
 Then, all unknown,
I'll lay me with th' inglorious dead,
 Forgot and gone!

But why o' death begin a tale?
Just now we're living sound an' hale;
Then top and maintop crowd the sail,
 Heave Care o'er-side!
And large, before Enjoyment's gale,
 Let's tak the tide.
This life, sae far's I understand,
Is a' enchanted fairy-land,
Where Pleasure is the magic-wand,
 That, wielded right,
Maks hours like minutes, hand in hand,
 Dance by fu' light.
The magic-wand then let us wield;
For ance that five-an'-forty's speel'd,
See, crazy, weary, joyless eild,
 Wi' wrinkl'd face,
Comes hostin, hirplin owre the field,
 Wi' creepin pace.
When ance life's day draws near the gloamin,
Then fareweel vacant, careless roamin;
An' fareweel cheerfu' tankards foamin,
 An' social noise:
An' fareweel dear, deluding woman,
 The joy of joys!
O Life! how pleasant, in thy morning,
Young Fancy's rays the hills adorning!
Cold-pausing Caution's lesson scorning,
 We frisk away,
Like school-boys, at th' expected warning,
 To joy an' play.
We wander there, we wander here,
We eye the rose upon the brier,
Unmindful that the thorn is near,
 Among the leaves;
And tho' the puny wound appear,
 Short while it grieves.

Some, lucky, find a flow'ry spot,
For which they never toil'd nor swat;
They drink the sweet and eat the fat,
But care or pain;
And haply eye the barren hut
With high disdain.

With steady aim, some fortune chase;
Keen hope does ev'ry sinew brace;
Thro' fair, thro' foul, they urge the race,
An' seize the prey:
Then cannie, in some cozie place,
They close the day.

And others, like your humble servan',
Poor wights! nae rules nor roads observin,
To right or left eternal swervin,
They zig-zag on;
Till, curst with age, obscure an' starvin,
They aften groan.

Alas! what bitter toil an' straining—
But truce with peevish, poor complaining!
Is fortune's fickle *Luna* waning?
E'en let her gang!
Beneath what light she has remaining,
Let's sing our sang.

My pen I here fling to the door,
And kneel, ye Pow'rs! and warm implore,
"Tho' I should wander *Terra* o'er,
In all her climes,
Grant me but this, I ask no more,
Ay rowth o' rhymes.

"Gie dreepin roasts to countra lairds,
Till icicles hing frae their beards;
Gie fine braw claes to fine life-guards,
And maids of honor;
An' yill an' whisky gie to cairds,
Until they sconner.

"A title, Dempster merits it;
 A garter gie to Willie Pitt;
 Gie wealth to some be-ledger'd cit,
 In cent. per cent.;
 But give me real, sterling wit,
 And I'm content.

"While ye are pleas'd to keep me hale,
 I'll sit down o'er my scanty meal,
 Be't water brose or muslin-kail,
 Wi' cheerfu' face,
 As lang's the Muses dinna fail
 To say the grace."

An anxious e'e I never throws
 Behint my lug, or by my nose;
 I jouk beneath Misfortune's blows
 As weel's I may;
 Sworn foe to sorrow, care, and prose,
 I rhyme away.

O ye douce folk that live by rule,
 Grave, tideless-blooded, calm an' cool,
 Compar'd wi' you—O fool! fool! fool!
 How much unlike!
 Your hearts are just a standing pool,
 Your lives, a dyke!

Nae hair-brain'd, sentimental traces
 In your unletter'd, nameless faces!
 In *arioso* trills and graces
 Ye never stray;
 But *gravissimo*, solemn basses
 Ye hum away.

Ye are sae grave, nae doubt ye're wise;
 Nae ferly tho' ye do despise
 The hairum-scaurum, ram-stam boys,
 The rattling squad;
 I see ye upward cast your eyes—
 Ye ken the road!

Whilst I—but I shall haud me there,
 Wi' you I'll scarce gang ony where—
 Then, Jamie, I shall say nae mair,
 But quat my sang,
 Content wi' you to mak a pair,
 Whare'er I gang.

THE VISION.⁵⁸

DUAN FIRST.

THE sun had clos'd the winter day,
 The curlers quat their roarin play,
 And hunger'd maukin taen her way,
 To kail-yards green,
 While faithless snaws ilk step betray
 Whare she has been.

The thresher's weary flingin-tree,
 The lee-lang day had tirèd me ;
 And when the day had clos'd his e'e,
 Far i' the west,
 Ben i' the spence, right pensivelie,
 I gaed to rest.

There, lanely by the ingle-cheek,
 I sat and ey'd the spewing reek,
 That fill'd, wi' hoast-provoking smeeek,
 The auld clay biggin ;
 An' heard the restless rattons squeak
 About the riggin.

All in this mottie, misty clime,
 I backward mus'd on wasted time,
 How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
 An' done naething,
 But stringing blethers up in rhyme,
 For fools to sing.

Had I to guid advice but harket,
 I might, by this, hae led a market,
 Or strutted in a bank and clarket
 My cash-account ;
 While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarket,
 Is a' th' amount.
 I started, mutt'ring "blockhead! coof!"
 And heav'd on high my wauket loof,
 To swear by a' yon starry roof,
 Or some rash aith,
 That I henceforth wad be rhyme-proof
 Till my last breath—
 When click! the string the snick did draw ;
 An' jee! the door gaed to the wa' ;
 An' by my ingle-lowe I saw,
 Now bleezin bright,
 A tight, outlandish hizzie, braw,
 Come full in sight.
 Ye need na doubt, I held my whisht ;
 The infant aith, half-form'd, was crusht ;
 I glowr'd, as eerie's I'd been dusht,
 In some wild glen ;
 When sweet, like modest Worth, she blusht,
 An' stèpped ben.
 Green, slender, leaf-clad holly-boughs
 Were twisted, gracefu', round her brows ;
 I took her for some Scottish Muse,
 By that same token ;
 And come to stop those reckless vows,
 Would soon been broken.
 A "hair-brain'd, sentimental trace"
 Was strongly marked in her face ;
 A wildly-witty, rustic grace
 Shone full upon her ;
 Her eye, ev'n turn'd on empty space,
 Beam'd keen with honor.

Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,
Till half a leg was scrimply seen ;
An' such a leg! my bonie Jean
 Could only peer it ;
Sae straught, sae taper, tight an' clean—
 Nane else came near it.

Her mantle large, of greenish hue,
My gazing wonder chiefly drew ;
Deep lights and shades, bold-mingling, threw
 A lustre grand ;
And seem'd, to my astonish'd view,
 A well-known land.

Here, rivers in the sea were lost ;
There, mountains to the skies were toss't :
Here, tumbling billows mark'd the coast,
 With surging foam ;
There, distant shone Art's lofty boast,
 The lordly dome.

Here, Doon pour'd down his far-fetch'd floods ;
There, well-fed Irwine stately thuds :
Auld hermit Ayr staw thro' his woods,
 On to the shore ;
And many a lesser torrent scuds,
 With seeming roar.

Low, in a sandy valley spread,
An ancient borough rear'd her head ;
Still, as in Scottish story read,
 She boasts a race
To ev'ry nobler virtue bred,
 And polish'd grace.

By stately tow'r, or palace fair,
Or ruins pendent in the air,
Bold stems of heroes, here and there,
 I could discern ;
Some seem'd to muse, some seem'd to dare,
 With feature stern.

My heart did glowing transport feel,
To see a race heroic wheel,
And brandish round the deep-dyed steel,
In sturdy blows ;
While, back-recoiling, seem'd to reel
Their suthron foes.

His Country's Saviour, mark him well !
Bold Richardton's heroic swell ,
The chief, on Sark who glorious fell
In high command ,
And he whom ruthless fates expel
His native land.

There, where a scep'tr'd Pictish shade
Stalk'd round his ashes lowly laid,
I mark'd a martial race, pourtray'd
In colours strong :
Bold, soldier-featur'd, undismay'd,
They strode along

Thro' many a wild, romantic grove,
Near many a hermit-fancied cove
(Fit haunts for friendship or for love,
In musing mood),
An aged Judge, I saw him rove,
Dispensing good.

With deep-struck, reverential awe,
The learned Sire and Son I saw :^a
To Nature's God, and Nature's law,
They gave their lore ;
This, all its source and end to draw,
That, to adore.

Brydon's brave ward^b I well could spy,
Beneath old Scotia's smiling eye ;
Who call'd on Fame, low standing by,
To hand him on, .
Where many a patriot-name on high,
And hero shone.

DUAN SECOND.

With musing-deep, astonish'd stare,
 I view'd the heavenly-seeming Fair ;
 A whispering throb did witness bear

Of kindred sweet,

When with an elder sister's air

She did me greet.

" All hail ! my own inspir'd bard !

In me thy native Muse regard ;

Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,

Thus poorly low ;

I come to give thee such reward,

As we bestow !

" Know, the great genius of this land

Has many a light aerial band,

Who, all beneath his high command

Harmoniously,

As arts or arms they understand,

Their labours ply.

" They Scotia's race among them share :

Some fire the soldier on to dare ;

Some rouse the patriot up to bare

Corruption's heart :

Some teach the bard—a darling care—

The tuneful art.

" 'Mong swelling floods of reeking gore,

They, ardent, kindling spirits pour ;

Or, 'mid the venal senate's roar,

They, sightless, stand,

To mend the honest patriot-lore,

And grace the hand.

" And when the bard, or hoary sage,

Charm or instruct the future age,

They bind the wild poetic rage

In energy,

Or point the inconclusive page

Full on the eye.

"Hence, Fullarton, the brave and young ;
Hence, Dempster's zeal-inspired tongue ;
Hence, sweet, harmonious Beattie sung

His 'Minstrel' lays ;
Or tore, with noble ardour stung,
The sceptic's bays.

"To lower orders are assign'd
The humbler ranks of human-kind,
The rustic bard, the laboring hind,
The artisan ;
All chuse, as various they're inclin'd,
The various man.

"When yellow waves the heavy grain,
The threat'ning storm some strongly rein ;
Some teach to meliorate the plain,
With tillage-skill ;
And some instruct the shepherd-train,
Blythe o'er the hill.

"Some hint the lover's harmless wile ;
Some grace the maiden's artless smile ;
Some soothe the laborer's weary toil
For humble gains,
And make his cottage-scenes beguile
His cares and pains.

"Some, bounded to a district-space,
Explore at large man's infant race,
To mark the embryotic trace
Of rustic bard ;
And careful note each opening grace,
A guide and guard.

"Of these am I—Coila my name :
And this district as mine I claim,
Where once the Campbells, chiefs of fame,
Held ruling pow'r :
I mark'd thy embryo-tuneful flame,
Thy natal hour.

“ With future hope I oft would gaze
Fond, on thy little early ways,
Thy rudely caroll’d, chiming phrase,
 In uncouth rhymes ;
Fir’d at the simple, artless lays
 Of other times.

“ I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar ;
Or when the North his fleecy store
 Drove thro’ the sky,
I saw grim Nature’s visage hoar
 Struck thy young eye.

“ Or when the deep green-mantled earth
Warm cherish’d ev’ry floweret’s birth,
And joy and music pouring forth
 In ev’ry grove ;
I saw thee eye the general mirth
 With boundless love.

“ When ripen’d fields and azure skies
Call’d forth the reapers’ rustling noise,
I saw thee leave their ev’ning joys,
 And lonely stalk,
To vent thy bosom’s swelling rise,
 In pensive walk

“ When youthful love, warm-blushing, strong,
Keen-shivering, shot thy nerves along,
Those accents grateful to thy tongue,
 Th’ adorèd *Name*,
I taught thee how to pour in song,
 To soothe thy flame.

“ I saw thy pulse’s maddening play,
Wild send thee Pleasure’s devious way,
Misled by Fancy’s meteor-ray,
 By passion driven ;
But yet the light that led astray
 Was light from Heaven.

"I taught thy manners-painting strains,
The loves, the ways of simple swains,
Till now, o'er all my wide domains

Thy fame extends ;

And some, the pride of Coila's plains,
Become thy friends.

"Thou canst not learn, nor I can show,
To paint with Thomson's landscape glow ;
Or wake the breathing throe,

With Shenstone's art ;

Or pour, with Gray, the moving flow
Warm on the heart

"Yet, all beneath th' unrivall'd rose,
The lowly daisy sweetly blows ;
Tho' large the forest's monarch throws

His army-shade,

Yet green the juicy hawthorn grows,
Adown the glade.

"Then never murmur nor repine ;
Strive in thy humble sphere to shine ;
And trust me, not Potosi's mine,

Nor king's regard,

Can give a bliss o'ermatching thine,
A rustic bard

"To give my counsels all in one,
Thy tuneful flame still careful fan :
Preserve the dignity of Man,

With soul erect ;

And trust the Universal Plan
Will all protect.

"And wear thou *this*"—she solemn said,
And bound the holly round my head :
The polish'd leaves and berries red

Did rustling play ,

And, like a passing thought, she fled
In light away.

THE RANTIN DOG, THE DADDIE O'T.⁵⁹

Tune—"Whare'll our gudeman lie."

O WHA my babie-clouts will buy?
 O wha will tend me when I cry?
 Wha will kiss me where I lie?
 The rantin dog, the daddie o't.

O wha will own he did the faut?
 O wha will buy the groanin maut?
 O wha will tell me how to ca't?
 The rantin dog, the daddie o't.

When I mount the creepie-chair,
 Wha will sit beside me there?
 Gie me Rob, I'll seek nae mair,
 The rantin dog, the daddie o't.

Wha will crack to me my lane?
 Wha will mak me fidgin fain?
 Wha will kiss me o'er again?
 The rantin dog, the daddie o't.

HERE'S HIS HEALTH IN WATER.⁶⁰

Tune—"The Job of Journey-work."

ALTHO' my back be at the wa',
 And tho' he be the fautor;
 Altho' my back be at the wa',
 Yet, here's his health in water.
 O wae gae by his wanton sides,
 Sae brawlie's he could flatter;
 Till for his sake I'm slighted sair,
 And dree the kintra clatter:
 But tho' my back be at the wa',
 Yet, here's his health in water.

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID.⁶¹

OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS.

My Son, these maxims make a rule,
 An' lump them ay thegither ;
 The *Rigid Righteous* is a fool,
 The *Rigid Wise* anither
 The cleanest corn that e'er was dight
 May hae some pyles o' caff in ;
 So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
 For random fits o' daffin.

—SOLOMON.—Eccles. ch. vii. verse 16.

O YE wha are sae guid yoursel,
 Sae pious and sae holy,
 Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
 Your neibours' fauts and folly!
 Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
 Supplied wi' store o' water ;
 The hèapet happer's ebbing still,
 An' still the clap plays clatter

Hear me, ye venerable core,
 As counsel for poor mortals
 That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door
 For glakit Folly's portals :
 I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
 Would here propone defences—
 Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
 Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compared,
 And shudder at the niffer ;
 But cast a moment's fair regard,
 What makes the mighty differ ?
 Discount what scant occasion gave,
 That purity ye pride in,
 And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
 Your better art o' hidin.

Think, when your castigated pulse
Gies now and then a wallop!
What ragings must his veins convulse,
That still eternal gallop!
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
Right on ye scud your sea-way;
But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
It maks an unco lee-way.

See Social Life and Glee sit down,
All joyous and unthinking,
Till, quite transmugrify'd, they're grown
Debauchery and Drinking:
O would they stay to calculate
Th' eternal consequences;
Or your more dreaded hell to state,
Damnation of expenses!

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
Tied up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor Frailty names,
Suppose a change o' cases;
A dear-lov'd lad, convenience snug,
A treach'rous inclination;
But, let me whisper i' your lug,
Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang,
To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving *Why* they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark,
How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord, its various tone,
Each spring its various bias:

Then at the balance let's be mute,
 We never can adjust it;
 What's done we partly may compute,
 But know not what's resisted.

THE INVENTORY ⁶²

IN ANSWER TO A MANDATE BY THE SURVEYOR OF
 THE TAXES.

SIR, as your mandate did request,
 I send you here a faithfu' list,
 O' gudes an' gear, an' a' my graith,
 To which I'm clear to gi'e my aith.

Imprimis, then, for carriage cattle,
 I hae four brutes o' gallant mettle,
 As ever drew before a pettle.
 My *Land-afore's* a guid auld "has been,"
 An' wight an' wilfu' a' his days been.
 My *Land-ahin's* a weel gaun fillie,
 That aft has borne me hame frae Kilhe,
 An' your auld borough mony a time,
 In days when riding was nae crime.
 But ance, when in my wooing pride
 I, like a blockhead, boost to ride,
 The wilfu' creature sae I pat to,
 (L—d pardon a' my sins, an' that too!)
 I play'd my fillie sic a shavie,
 She's a' bedevil'd wi' the spavie.
 My *Furr-ahin's* a wordy beast,
 As e'er in tug or tow was traced.
 The fourth's a Highland Donald hastie,
 A d—n'd red-wud Kilburnie blastie!
 Foreby a cowl, o' cowts the wale,
 As ever ran before a tail:
 Gin he be spar'd to be a beast,
 He'll draw me fifteen pund at least.

Wheel-carriages I ha'e but few,
 Three carts, an' twa are feckly new ;
 An auld wheelbarrow, mair for token,
 Ae leg an' baith the trams are broken ;
 I made a poker o' the spin'le,
 An' my auld mither brunt the trin'le.

For men, I've three mischievous boys,
 Run-deils for rantin an' for noise ;
 A gaudsman ane, a thrasher t' other :
 Wee Davock hauds the nowt in fother.
 I rule them as I ought, discreetly,
 An' aften labour them completely ;
 An' ay on Sundays duly, nightly,
 I on the " Questions " *targe* them tightly ;
 Till, faith ! wee Davock's grown sae gleg,
 Tho' scarcely langer than your leg,
 He'll screed you aff Effectual Calling,
 As fast as ony in the dwelling.
 I've nane in female servan' station,
 (L—d keep me ay frae a' temptation !)
 I hae nae wife—and that my bliss is,
 An' ye have laid nae tax on misses ;
 An' then, if kirk folk dinna clutch me,
 I ken the deevils darena touch me.
 Wi' weans I'm mair than weel contented,
 Heav'n sent me ane mair than I wanted :
 My sonsie, smirking, dear-bought Bess,
 She stares the daddy in her face,
 Enough of ought ye like but grace :
 But her, my bonie, sweet wee lady,
 I've paid enough for her already ;
 An' gin ye tax her or her mither,
 By the L—d, ye'se get them a' thegither !

And now, remember, Mr. Aiken,
 Nae kind o' licence out I'm takin :
 Frae this time forth, I do declare
 I'se ne'er ride horse nor hizzie mair ;

Thro' dirt and dub for life I'll paidle,
 Ere I sae dear pay for a saddle ;
 My travel a', on foot I'll shank it,
 I've sturdy bearers, Gude be thankit !
 The kirk and you may tak' you that,
 It puts but little in your pat ;
 Sae dinna put me in your beuk,
 Nor for my ten white shillings leuk.

This list, wi' my ain hand I wrote it,
 The day and date as under noted ;
 Then know all ye whom it concerns,
Subscripsi huic, ROBERT BURNS.

MOSSGIEL, *February 22, 1786.*

TO JOHN KENNEDY, DUMFRIES HOUSE.⁶³

Now, Kennedy, if foot or horse
 E'er bring you in by Mauchlin corse,
 (Lord, man, there's lasses there wad force
 A hermit's fancy ;
 An' down the gate in faith they're worse,
 An' mair unchancy).

But as I'm sayin, please step to Dow's,
 An' taste sic gear as Johnie brews,
 Till some bit callan bring me news
 That ye are there ;
 An' if we dinna hae a bouze,
 I'se ne'er drink mair.

It's no I like to sit an' swallow,
 Then like a swine to puke an' wallow ;
 But gie me just a true good fallow,
 Wi' right ingine,
 And spunkie ance to mak us mellow,
 An' then we'll shine.

Now if ye're ane o' warl's folk,
 Wha rate the wearer by the cloak,
 An' sklent on poverty their joke,
 Wi' bitter sneer,
 Wi' you nae friendship I will troke,
 Nor cheap nor dear.

But if, as I'm informèd weel,
 Ye hate as ill's the vera deil
 The flinty heart that canna feel—
 Come, sir, here's to you!
 Hae, there's my haun, I wiss ye weel,
 An' gude be wi' you.

MOSSGIEL, 3rd March, 1786.

ROBT. BURNES.

TO MR. M'ADAM, OF CRAIGEN-GILLAN,
 IN ANSWER TO AN OBLIGING LETTER HE SENT IN THE COM-
 MENCEMENT OF MY POETIC CAREER

SIR, o'er a gill I gat your card,
 I trow it made me proud ;
 "See wha taks notice o' the bard!"
 I lap and cry'd fu' loud.

Now deil-ma-care about their jaw,
 The senseless, gawky million ;
 I'll cock my nose aboon them a',
 I'm roos'd by Craigen-Gillan!

'Twas noble, sir ; 'twas like yoursel,
 To grant your high protection :
 A great man's smile, ye ken fu' well,
 Is ay a blest infection

Tho', by his banes wha in a tub
 Match'd Macedonian Sandy!
 On my ain legs thro' dirt and dub,
 I independent stand ay,—



And when those legs to gude, warm kail,
 Wi' welcome canna bear me,
 A lee dyke-side, a sybow-tail,
 An' barley-scone shall cheer me.

Heaven spare you lang to kiss the breath
 O' mony flow'ry simmers!
 An' bless your bonie lasses baith,
 I'm tauld they're loosome kimmers!

An' God bless young Dunaskin's laird,
 The blossom of our gentry!
 An' may he wear an auld man's beard,
 A credit to his country

TO A LOUSE.⁶⁴

ON SEEING ONE ON A LADY'S BONNET AT CHURCH.

HA! whaur ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie?
 Your impudence protects you sairly;
 I canna say but ye strunt rarely,
 Owre gauze and lace;
 Tho' faith! I fear, ye dine but sparely
 On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin, blasted wonner,
 Detested, shunn'd by saunt an' sinner,
 How daur ye set your fit upon her—
 Sae fine a lady?
 Gae somewhere else, and seek your dinner
 On some poor body.

Swith! in some beggar's haffet squattle,
 Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattle;
 There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle,
 In shoals and nations;
 Whaur horn nor bane ne'er daur unsettle
 Your thick plantations.

Now haud you there, ye're out o' sight,
 Below the fatt'rels, snug and tight,
 Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right,
 Till ye've got on it—
 The verra tapmost, tow'rin height
 O' Miss's bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
 As plump an' grey as ony groset :
 O for some rank, mercurial rozet,
 Or fell, red smeddum,
 I'd gie you sic a hearty dose o't,
 Wad dress your droddum.

I wad na been surpris'd to spy
 You on an auld wife's flannen toy ;
 Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,
 On's wyliecoat ;
 But Miss's fine Lunardi!^a fye!
 How daur ye do't?

O Jeany, dinna toss your head,
 An' set your beauties a' abroad!
 Ye little ken what cursed speed
 The blastie's makin :
 Thae winks an' finger-ends, I dread,
 Are notice takin.

O wad some Power the giftie gie us
 To see oursels as ithers see us!
 It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
 An' foolish notion :
 What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
 An' ev'n devotion!

INSCRIBED ON A WORK OF HANNAH MORE'S.

PRESENTED TO THE AUTHOR BY A LADY.

THOU flatt'ring mark of friendship kind,
Still may thy pages call to mind

The dear, the beauteous, donor ;
Tho' sweetly female ev'ry part,
Yet such a head, and more—the heart

Does both the sexes honor :
She show'd her taste refin'd and just,
When she selected thee ;

Yet deviating, own I must,
For sae approving me :
But kind still I'll mind still
The *giver* in the gift ;
I'll bless her, an' wiss her
A Friend aboon the lift.

THE HOLY FAIR.⁶⁵

A robe of seeming truth and trust
Hid crafty observation ;
And secret hung, with poison'd crust,
The dirk of defamation :
A mask that like the gorget show'd,
Dye-varying on the pigeon ;
And for a mantle large and broad,
He wrapt him in *Religion*.—HYPOCRISY A-LA-MODE.

UPON a simmer Sunday morn,
When Nature's face is fair,
I walk'd forth to view the corn,
An' snuff the caller air.
The rising sun owre Galston muirs
Wi' glorious light was glintin ;
The hares were hirplin down the furs,
The lav'rocks they were chantin
Fu' sweet that day.

As light-somely I glowr'd abroad,
 To see a scene sae gay,
 Three hizzies, early at the road,
 Cam skelpin up the way.
 Twa had manteeles o' dolefu' black,
 But ane wi' lyart lining ;
 The third, that gaed a wee a-back,
 Was in the fashion shining,
 Fu' gay that day.

The twa appear'd like sisters twin,
 In feature, form, an' claes ;
 Their visage wither'd, lang an' thin,
 An' sour as ony slaes :
 The third cam up, hap-stap-an'-lowp,
 As light as ony lambie,
 An' wi' a curchie low did stoop,
 As soon as e'er she saw me,
 Fu' kind that day.

Wi' bonnet aff, quoth I, " Sweet lass,
 I think ye seem to ken me ;
 I'm sure I've seen that bonie face,
 But yet I canna name ye."
 Quo' she, an' laughin as she spak,
 An' taks me by the hands,
 " Ye, for my sake, hae gien the feck
 Of a' the ten commands
 A screed some day."

" My name is Fun—your cronie dear,
 The nearest friend ye hae ;
 An' this is Superstition here,
 An' that's Hypocrisy.
 I'm gaun to Mauchline ' holy fair,'
 To spend an' hour in daffin :
 Gin ye'll go there, yon runkl'd pair,
 We will get famous laughin
 At them this day."

Quoth I, " Wi' a' my heart, I'll do't ;
 I'll get my Sunday's sark on,
 An' meet you on the holy spot ;
 Faith, we'se hae fine remarkin' !"
 Then I gaed hame at crowdie-time,
 An' soon I made me ready ;
 For roads were clad, frae side to side,
 Wi' mony a wearie body,
 In droves that day.

Here farmers gash, in ridin graith,
 Gaed hoddin by their cottars ,
 There swankies young, in braw braid-claith,
 Are springin owre the gutters.
 The lasses, skelpin barefit, thrang,
 In silks an' scarlets glitter ;
 Wi' sweet-milk cheese, in mony a whang,
 An' farls, bak'd wi' butter,
 Fu' crump that day.

When by the " plate " we set our nose,
 Weel heaped up wi' ha'pence,
 A greedy glowr " black-bonnet " throws,
 An' we maun draw our tippence.
 Then in we go to see the show :
 On ev'ry side they're gath'rin ;
 Some carrying dails, some chairs an' stools,
 An' some are busy bleth'rin
 Right loud that day.

Here stands a shed to fend the show'rs,
 An,screen our countra gentry ;
 There " Racer Jess,"* an twa-three wh-res,
 Are blinkin at the entry.
 Here sits a raw o' tittlin jads,
 Wi' heavin breasts an' bare neck ;
 An' there a batch o' wabster lads,
 Blackguardin frae Kilmarnock,
 For fun this day.

Here some are thinkin on their sins,
 An' some upo' their claes ;
 Ane curses feet that fyl'd his shins,
 Anither sighs an' prays :
 On this hand sits a chosen swatch,
 Wi' screw'd-up, grace-proud faces ;
 On that a set o' chaps, at watch,
 Thrang winkin on the lasses
 To chairs that day.

O happy is that man, an' blest !
 Nae wonder that it pride him !
 Whase ain dear lass, that he likes best,
 Comes clinkin down beside him !
 Wi' arm repos'd on the chair back,
 He sweetly does compose him ;
 Which, by degrees, slips round her neck,
 An's loof upon her bosom,
 Unkend that day.

Now a' the congregation o'er
 Is silent expectation ;
 For Moodie speels the holy door,
 Wi' tidings o' damnation :
 Should *Hornie*, as in ancient days,
 'Mang sons o' God present him,
 The vera sight o' Moodie's face,
 To 's ain het hame had sent him
 Wi' fright that day.

Hear how he clears the points o' Faith
 Wi' rattlin and wi' thumpin !
 Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
 He's stampin, an' he's jumpin ;
 His lengthen'd chin, his turned-up snout,
 His eldritch squeel an' gestures,
 O how they fire the heart devout,
 Like cantharidian plaisters
 On sic a day !

But hark! the tent has chang'd its voice;
There's peace an' rest nae langer;
For a' the real judges rise,
They canna sit for anger,
Smith opens out his cauld harangues,
On practice and on morals;
An' aff the godly pour in thrangs,
To gie the jars an' barrels
A lift that day.

What signifies his barren shine,
Of moral powers an' reason?
His English style, an' gesture fine
Are a' clean out o' season.
Like Socrates or Antonine,
Or some auld pagan heathen,
The *moral man* he does define,
But ne'er a word o' *faith* in
That's right that day.

In guid time comes an antidote
Against sic poison'd nostrum;
For Peebles, frae the water-fit,
Ascends the holy rostrum:
See, up he's got the word o' God,
An' meek an' mim has view'd it,
While "Common-sense" has taen the road
An' aff, an' up the Cowgate^b
Fast, fast that day.

Wee Miller niest, the Guard relieves,
An' Orthodoxy raibles,
Tho' in his heart he weel believes,
An' thinks it auld wives' fables:
But faith! the birkie wants a manse,
So, cannilie he hums them;
Altho' his carnal wit an' sense
Like hafflins-wise o'ercomes him
At times that day.

Now butt an' ben the change-house fills,
 Wi' yill-caup commentators ;
 Here's cryin out for bakes and gills,
 An' there the pint-stowp clatters ;
 While thick an' thrang, an' loud an' lang,
 Wi' logic an' wi' scripture,
 They raise a din, that in the end
 Is like to breed a rupture
 O' wrath that day.

Leeze me on drink ! it gies us mair
 Than either school or college ;
 It ken'les wit, it waukens lear,
 It pangs us fou o' knowledge :
 Be't whisky-gill or penny-wheep,
 Or ony stronger potion,
 It never fails, on drinkin deep,
 To kittle up our notion,
 By night or day.

The lads an' lasses, blythely bent
 To mind baith saul an' body,
 Sit round the table, weel content,
 An' steer about the toddy :
 On this ane's dress, an' that ane's leuk,
 They're makin observations ;
 While some are cozie i' the neuk,
 An' forming assignations
 To meet some day.

But now the L—'s ain trumpet touts,
 Till a' the hills are rairin,
 And echoes back-return the shouts ;
 Black Russell is na sparín :
 His piercin words, like Highlan' swords,
 Divide the joints an' marrow ;
 His talk o' Hell, whare devils dwell,
 Our vera " sauls does harrow "
 Wi' fright that day !

A vast, unbottom'd, boundless pit,
 Fill'd fou o' lowin brunstane,
 Whase ragin flame, an' scorching heat,
 Wad melt the hardest whun-stane!
 The half-asleep start up wi' fear,
 An' think they hear it roarin;
 When presently it does appear,
 'Twas but some neibor snorin
 Asleep that day.

'Twad be owre lang a tale to tell,
 How mony stories past;
 An' how they crouded to the yill,
 When they were a' dismist;
 How drink gaed round, in cogs an' caups,
 Amang the furms an' benches;
 An' cheese an' bread, frae women's laps,
 Was dealt about in lunches,
 An' dawds that day.

In comes a gawsie, gash guidwife,
 An' sits down by the fire,
 Syne draws her kebbuck an' her knife;
 The lasses they are shyer:
 The auld guidmen, about the grace,
 Frae side to side they bother;
 Till some ane by his bonnet lays,
 An' gies them't, like a tether,
 Fu' lang that day.

Waesucks! for him that gets nae lass,
 Or lasses that hae naething!
 Sma' need has he to say a grace,
 Or melvie his braw clathing!
 O wives, be mindfu' ance'yoursel
 How bonie lads ye wanted;
 An' dinna, for a kebbuck-heel,
 Let lasses be affronted
 On sic a day!

Now 'Chnkumbell,' wi' rattlin tow,
 Begins to jow an' croon;
 Some swagger hame the best they dow,
 Some wait the afternoon.
 At slaps the billies halt a blink,
 Till lasses strip their shoon:
 Wi' faith an' hope, an' love an' drink,
 They're a' in famous tune
 For crack that day.

How mony hearts this day converts
 O' sinners and o' lasses!
 Their hearts o' stane, gin night, are gane
 As saft as ony flesh is:
 There's some are fou o' love divine;
 There's some are fou o' brandy;
 An' mony jobs that day begin,
 May end in 'houghmagandie'
 Some ither day.

AND MAUN I STILL ON MENIE DOAT.⁶⁶

Tune—"Johnny's Grey Breeks."

AGAIN rejoicing Nature sees
 Her robe assume its vernal hues:
 Her leafy locks wave in the breeze,
 All freshly steep'd in morning dews.

Chorus.—And maun I still on Menie doat,
 And bear the scorn that's in her e'e?
 For it's jet, jet-black, an' it's like a hawk,
 An' it winna let a body be.

In vain to me the cowslips blaw,
 In vain to me the vi'lets spring;
 In vain to me in glen or shaw,
 The mavis and the lintwhite sing,
 And maun I still, etc.

The merry ploughboy cheers his team,
 Wi' joy the tentie seedsman stalks;
 But life's to me a weary dream,
 A dream of ane that never wauks.
 And maun I still, etc.

The wanton coot the water skims,
 Amang the reeds the ducklings cry,
 The stately swan majestic swims,
 And ev'ry thing is blest but I.
 And maun I still, etc.

The sheep-herd steeks his faulding slap,
 And o'er the moorlands whistles shrill;
 Wi' wild, unequal, wand'ring step,
 I meet him on the dewy hill.
 And maun I still, etc.

And when the lark, 'tween light and dark,
 Blythe waukens by the daisy's side,
 And mounts and sings on flitting wings,
 A woe-worn ghaist I hameward glide.
 And maun I still, etc.

Come winter, with thine angry howl,
 And raging, bend the naked tree;
 Thy gloom will soothe my cheerless soul,
 When nature all is sad like me!
 And maun I still, etc.

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY.⁸⁷

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH, IN APRIL, 1786.

WEE, modest, crimson-tippèd flow'r,
 Thou's met me in an evil hour;
 For I maun crush amang the stoure
 Thy slender stem:
 To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
 Thou bonie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neibor sweet,
The bonie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
 Wi' spreckl'd breast!
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
 The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
 Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent-earth
 Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield;
But thou, beneath the random bield
 O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble field,
 Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
 In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
 And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
 And guileless trust;
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
 Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
 Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
 And overwhelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,
 Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
 By human pride or cunning driv'n
 To mis'ry's brink;
 Till wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
 He, run'd, sink!

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
 That fate is thine—no distant date;
 Stern Ruin's plough-share drives elate,
 Full on thy bloom,
 Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
 Shall be thy doom!

TO RUIN.

ALL hail, inexorable lord!
 At whose destruction-breathing word,
 The mightiest empires fall!
 Thy cruel, woe-delighted train,
 The ministers of grief and pain,
 A sullen welcome, all!
 With stern-resolv'd, despairing eye,
 I see each aimèd dart;
 For one has cut my dearest tie,
 And quivers in my heart.
 Then low'ring, and pouring,
 The storm no more I dread;
 Tho' thick'ning, and black'ning,
 Round my devoted head.

And thou grim Pow'r by life abhorr'd,
 While life a pleasure can afford,
 Oh! hear a wretch's pray'r!
 No more I shrink appall'd, afraid;
 I court, I beg thy friendly aid,
 To close this scene of care!

When shall my soul, in silent peace,
 Resign life's joyless day—
 My weary heart its throbbings cease,
 Cold mould'ring in the clay?
 No fear more, no tear more,
 To stain my lifeless face,
 Enclaspèd, and graspèd,
 Within thy cold embrace!

THE LAMENT.⁶⁸

OCCASIONED BY THE UNFORTUNATE ISSUE OF A FRIEND'S
 AMOUR.

"Alas ! how oft does goodness wound itself,
 And sweet affection prove the spring of woe !"—HOME.

O THOU pale orb that silent shines,
 While care-untroubled mortals sleep !
 Thou seest a wretch who inly pines,
 And wanders here to wail and weep !
 With woe I nightly vigils keep,
 Beneath thy wan, unwarming beam ;
 And mourn, in lamentation deep,
 How life and love are all a dream !

I joyless view thy rays adorn
 The faintly-markèd, distant hill ;
 I joyless view thy trembling horn,
 Reflected in the gurgling rill :
 My fondly-fluttering heart, be still !
 Thou busy pow'r, remembrance, cease !
 Ah ! must the agonizing thrill
 For ever bar returning peace !

No idly-feign'd, poetic pains,
 My sad, love-lorn lamentings claim :
 No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains ;
 No fabled tortures, quaint and tame.

The plighted faith, the mutual flame,
The oft-attested pow'rs above,
The promis'd father's tender name;
These were the pledges of my love!

Encircled in her clasping arms,
How have the raptur'd moments flown!
How have I wish'd for fortune's charms,
For her dear sake, and her's alone!
And, must I think it! is she gone,
My secret heart's exulting boast?
And does she heedless hear my groan?
And is she ever, ever lost?

Oh! can she bear so base a heart,
So lost to honour, lost to truth,
As from the fondest lover part,
The plighted husband of her youth?
Alas! life's path may be unsmooth!
Her way may lie thro' rough distress!
Then, who her pangs and pains will soothe,
Her sorrows share, and make them less?

Ye wing'd hours that o'er us pass'd,
Enraptur'd more, the more enjoy'd,
Your dear remembrance in my breast
My fondly-treasur'd thoughts employ'd:
That breast, how dreary now, and void,
For her too scanty once of room!
Ev'n ev'ry ray of hope destroy'd,
And not a wish to gild the gloom!

The morn that warns th' approaching day,
Awakes me up to toil and woe;
I see the hours in long array,
That I must suffer, lingering slow:
Full many a pang, and many a throe,
Keen recollection's direful train,
Must wring my soul, ere Phoebus, low,
Shall kiss the distant western main.

And when my nightly couch I try,
 Sore harass'd out with care and grief,
 My toil-beat nerves, and tear-worn eye,
 Keep watchings with the nightly thief :
 Or if I slumber, fancy, chief,
 Reigns, haggard-wild, in sore affright :
 Ev'n day, all-bitter, brings relief
 From such a horror-breathing night.
 O thou bright queen, who, o'er th' expanse
 Now highest reign'st, with boundless sway !
 Oft has thy silent-marking glance
 Observ'd us, fondly-wand'ring, stray !
 The time, unheeded, sped away,
 While love's luxurious pulse beat high,
 Beneath thy silver-gleaming ray,
 To mark the mutual-kindling eye.
 Oh ! scenes in strong remembrance set !
 Scenes, never, never to return !
 Scenes, if in stupor I forget,
 Again I feel, again I burn !
 From ev'ry joy and pleasure torn,
 Life's weary vale I'll wander thro' ;
 And hopeless, comfortless, I'll mourn
 A faithless woman's broken vow !

DESPONDENCY—AN ODE.

OPPRESS'D with grief, oppress'd with care,
 A burden more than I can bear,
 I set me down and sigh ;
 O life ! thou art a galling load,
 Along a rough, a weary road,
 To wretches such as I !
 Dim-backward as I cast my view,
 What sick'ning scenes appear !
 What sorrows yet may pierce me through,
 Too justly I may fear !



Still caring, despairing,
Must be my bitter doom ;
My woes here shall close ne'er
But with the closing tomb!

Happy! ye sons of busy life,
Who, equal to the bustling strife,
No other view regard!
Ev'n when the wish'd end's denied,
Yet while the busy means are plied,
They bring their own reward :
Whilst I, a hope-abandon'd wight,
Unfitted with an aim,
Meet ev'ry sad returning night,
And joyless morn the same!
You, bustling and justling,
Forget each grief an' pain ;
I, listless, yet restless,
Find ev'ry prospect vain.

How blest the solitary's lot,
Who, all-forgetting, all-forgot,
Within his humble cell,
The cavern, wild with tangling roots,
Sits o'er his newly gather'd fruits,
Beside his crystal well!
Or haply, to his ev'ning thought,
By unfrequented stream,
The ways of men are distant brought,
A faint, collected dream ;
While praising, and raising
His thoughts to heav'n on high,
As wand'ring, meand'ring,
He views the solemn sky.

Than I, no lonely hermit plac'd
Where never human footstep trac'd,
Less fit to play the part ;

The lucky moment to improve,
 And just to stop, and just to move,
 With self-respecting art ·
 But ah! those pleasures, loves, and joys,
 Which I too keenly taste,
 The solitary can despise—
 Can want, and yet be blest!
 He needs not, he heeds not,
 Or human love or hate,
 Whilst I here must cry here
 At perfidy ingrate!

O enviable early days,
 When dancing thoughtless pleasure's maze,
 To care, to guilt unknown!
 How ill exchange'd for riper times,
 To feel the follies, or the crimes,
 Of others, or my own!
 Ye tiny elves that guiltless sport,
 Like linnets in the bush,
 Ye little know the ills ye court,
 When manhood is your wish!
 The losses, the crosses,
 That active man engage;
 The fears all, the tears all,
 Of dim declining Age!

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ., MAUCHLINE.

RECOMMENDING A BOY.

MOSSGAVILLE, *May 3, 1786.*

I HOLD it, sir, my bounden duty
 To warn you how that "Master Tootie,"
 'Alias, "Laird M'Gaun,"
 Was here to hire yon lad away
 'Bout whom ye spak the tither day,
 An' wad hae done't aff han' ;

But lest he learn the callan tricks—
 An' faith I muckle doubt him—
 Like scrapin out auld Crummie's nicks,
 An' tellin lies about them ;
 As lieve then, I'd have then,
 Your clerkship he should sair,
 If sae be ye may be
 Not fitted oth'erwhere.

Altho' I say't, he's gleg enough,
 An' bout a house that's rude an' rough,
 The boy might learn to swear ;
 But then wi' *you* he'll be sae taught,
 An' get sic fair example straught,
 I hae na ony fear.
 Ye'll catechise him, every quirk,
 An' shore him weel wi' " hell ;"
 An' gar him follow to the kirk—
 Ay when ye gang yoursel.
 If ye then, maun be then
 Frae hame this comin Friday,
 Then please, sir, to lea'e, sir,
 The orders wi' your lady.

My word of honour I hae gi'en,
 In Paisley John's, that night at e'en,
 To meet the " warld's worm ;"
 To try to get the twa to gree,
 An' name the airles an' the fee,
 In legal mode an' form :
 I ken he weel a *snick* can draw,
 When simple bodies let him ;
 An' if a Devil be at a',
 In faith he's sure to get him.
 To phrase you an' praise you,
 Ye ken your Laureat scorns :
 The pray'r still, you share still,
 Of grateful MINSTREL BURNS.

VERSIFIED REPLY TO AN INVITATION.

SIR,

Yours this moment I unseal,
 And faith I'm gay and hearty!
 To tell the truth and shame the deil,
 I am as fou as Bartie:
 But Foorsday, sir, my promise leal,
 Expect me o' your partie,
 If on a beastie I can speil,
 Or hurl in a cartie.

Yours,

MAUCHLIN, *Monday night, 10 o'clock.*

ROBERT BURNS.

WILL YE GO TO THE INDIES, MY MARY? 69

Tune—"Ewe-Bughts, Marion."

WILL ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
 And leave auld Scotia's shore?
 Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
 Across th' Atlantic's roar?

O sweet grows the lime and the orange,
 And the apple on the pine;
 But a' the charms o' the Indies
 Can never equal thine.

I hae sworn by the Heavens to my Mary,
 I hae sworn by the Heavens to be true;
 And sae may the Heavens forget me,
 When I forget my vow!

O plight me your faith, my Mary,
 And plight me your lily-white hand;
 O plight me your faith, my Mary,
 Before I leave Scotia's strand.

We hae plighted our troth, my Mary,
 In mutual affection to join;
 And curst be the cause that shall part us!
 The hour and the moment o' time!

MY HIGHLAND LASSIE, O.⁷⁰

NAE gentle dames, tho' ne'er sae fair,
Shall ever be my muse's care :
Their titles a' are empty show ;
Gie me my Highland lassie, O.

Chorus.—Within the glen sae bushy, O,
Aboon the plain sae rashy, O,
I set me down wi' right guid will,
To sing my Highland lassie, O.

O were yon hills and vallies mine,
Yon palace and yon gardens fine!
The world then the love should know
I bear my Highland lassie, O.

But fickle fortune frowns on me,
And I maun cross the raging sea ;
But while my crimson currents flow,
I'll love my Highland lassie, O.

Altho' thro' foreign climes I range,
I know her heart will never change,
For her bosom burns with honour's glow,
My faithful Highland lassie, O.

For her I'll dare the billow's roar,
For her I'll trace a distant shore,
That Indian wealth may lustre throw
Around my Highland lassie, O.

She has my heart, she has my hand,
By secret troth and honor's band!
'Till the mortal stroke shall lay me low,
I'm thine, my Highland lassie, O.

Farewell the glen sae bushy, O!
Farewell the plain sae rashy, O!
To other lands I now must go,
To sing my Highland lassie, O.

EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND.⁷¹*May —, 1786.*

I LANG hae thought, my youthfu' friend,
A something to have sent you,
Tho' it should serve nae ither end
Than just a kind memento :
But how the subject-theme may gang,
Let time and chance determine ;
Perhaps it may turn out a sang ;
Perhaps, turn out a sermon.

Ye'll try the world soon, my lad ;
And, Andrew dear, believe me,
Ye'll find mankind an unco squad,
And muckle they may grieve ye :
For care and trouble set your thought
Ev'n when your end's attained ;
And a' your views may come to nought,
Where ev'ry nerve is strained.

I'll no say men are villains a' ;
The real, harden'd wicked,
Wha hae nae check but human law,
Are to a few restricked ;
But, och ! mankind are unco weak,
An' little to be trusted ;
If *self* the wavering balance shake,
It's rarely right adjusted !

Yet they wha fa' in fortune's strife,
Their fate we shouldna censure ;
For still, th' important end of life
They equally may answer ;
A man may hae an honest heart,
Tho' poortith hourly stare him ;
A man may tak a neibor's part,
Yet hae nae cash to spare him.

Ay free, aff han', your story tell,
When wi' a bosom crony ;
But still keep something to yoursel
Ye scarcely tell to ony :
Conceal yoursel as weel's ye can
Frae critical dissection ;
But keek thro' ev'ry other man,
Wi' sharpen'd, sly inspection.
The sacred lowe o' weel-plac'd love,
Luxuriantly indulge it ;
But never tempt th' illicit rove
Tho' naething should divulge it :
I wave the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard of concealing ;
But, och ! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling !
To catch dame Fortune's golden smile,
Assiduous wait upon her ;
And gather gear by ev'ry wile
That's justify'd by honor ;
Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Nor for a train attendant ;
But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent.
The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip,
To haud the wretch in order ;
But where ye feel your honour grip,
Let that ay be your border :
Its slightest touches, instant pause—
Debar a' side-pretences ;
And resolutely keeps its laws,
Uncaring consequences.
The great Creator to revere,
Must sure become the creature ; .
But still the preaching cant forbear,
And ev'n the rigid feature :

Yet ne'er with wits profane to range,
 Be complaisance extended ;
 An atheist-laugh's a poor exchange
 For Deity offended !

When ranting round in pleasure's ring,
 Religion may be blinded ;
 Or if she gie a random sting,
 It may be little minded ;
 But when on life we're tempest-driv'n—
 A conscience but a canker—
 A correspondence fix'd wi' Heav'n,
 Is sure a noble anchor !

Adieu, dear, amiable youth !
 Your heart can ne'er be wanting !
 May prudence, fortitude, and truth,
 Erect your brow undaunting !
 In ploughman phrase, " God send you speed,"
 Still daily to grow wiser ;
 And may ye better reckon the rede,
 Than ever did th' adviser !

ADDRESS OF BEELZEBUB.

To the Right Honorable the Earl of Breadalbane, President of the Right Honorable and Honorable the Highland Society, which met on the 23rd of May last, at the Shakespeare, Covent Garden, to concert ways and means to frustrate the designs of five hundred Highlanders who, as the Society were informed by Mr. M'Kenzie of Applecross, were so audacious as to attempt an escape from their lawful lords and masters whose property they are, by emigrating from the lands of Mr. Macdonald of Glengary to the wilds of Canada, in search of that fantastic thing—LIBERTY.

LONG life, my lord, an' health be yours,
 Unskaith'd by hunger'd Highland boors ;
 Lord grant nae duddie, desperate beggar,
 Wi' dirk, claymore, and rusty trigger,
 May twin auld Scotland o' a life
 She likes—as lambkins like a knife.

Faith, you and Applecross were right
To keep the Highland hounds in sight :
I doubt na! they wad bid nae better,
Than let them ance out owre the water,
Then up amang thae lakes and seas,
They'll mak what rules and laws they please :
Some daring Hancoke, or a Franklin,
May set their Highland bluid a-ranklin ;
Some Washington again may head them,
Or some Montgomery, fearless, lead them ,
Till (God knows what may be effected
When by such heads and hearts directed),
Poor dunghill sons of dirt and mire
May to Patrician rights aspire !
Nae sage North now, nor sager Sackville,
To watch and premier o'er the pack vile,—
An' whare will ye get Howes and Clintons
To bring them to a right repentance—
To cowe the rebel generation,
An' save the honor o' the nation ?
They, an' be d—d! what right hae they
To meat, or sleep, or light o' day ?
Far less—to riches, pow'r, or freedom,
But what your lordship likes to gie them ?

But hear, my lord! Glengary, hear!
Your hand's owre light on them, I fear ;
Your factors, grieves, trustees, and bailies,
I canna say but they do gaylies ;
They lay aside a' tender mercies,
An' tirl the hallions to the birses ;
Yet while they're only poid't and herriet,
They'll keep their stubborn Highland spirit :
But smash them! crash them a' to spails,
An' rot the dyvors i' the jails!
The young dogs, swinge them to the labour ;
Let wark an' hunger mak them sober!

The hizzies, if they're aughtlins fawsont,
 Let them in Drury-lane be lesson'd!
 An' if the wives an' dirty brats
 Come thiggin at your doors an' yetts,
 Flaffin wi' duds, an' grey wi' beas',
 Frightin away your ducks an' geese;
 Get out a horsewhip or a jowler,
 The langest thong, the fiercest growler,
 An' gar the tatter'd gypsies pack
 Wi' a' their bastards on their back!

Go on, my Lord! I lang to meet you,
 An' in my "house at hame" to greet you;
 Wi' common lords ye shanna mingle,
 The benmost neuk beside the ingle,
 At my right han' assigned your seat,
 'Tween Herod's hip an' Polycrate;
 Or (if you on your station tarro),
 Between Almagro and Pizarro,
 A seat, I'm sure ye're well deservin't;
 An' till ye come—your humble servant,

June 1st, Anno Mundi 5790.

BEELZEBUB.

A D R E A M.⁷²

Thoughts, words, and deeds, the Statute blames with reason;
 But surely *Dreams* were ne'er indicted Treason.

On reading, in the public papers, the Laureate's Ode, with the other parade of June 4, 1786, the Author was no sooner dropt asleep, than he imagined himself transported to the Birthday Levee; and, in his dreaming fancy, made the following Address:—

GUID-MORNIN to your Majesty!
 May Heaven augment your blisses
 On ev'ry new birthday ye see,
 A humble poet wishes.
 My bardship here, at your Levee
 O sic a day as this is,
 Is sure an uncouth sight to see,
 Amang thae birthday dresses
 Sae fine this day.

I see ye're complimented thrang,
By mony a lord an' lady ;
" God save the King " 's a cuckoo sang
That's unco easy said ay :
The poets, too, a venal gang,
Wi' rhymes weel-turn'd an' ready,
Wad gar you trow ye ne'er do wrang,
But ay unerring steady,
On sic a day.

For me! before a monarch's face,
Ev'n there I winna flatter ,
For neither pension, post, nor place,
Am I your humble debtor :
So, nae reflection on your Grace,
Your Kingship to bespatter ;
There's mony waur been o' the race,
And aiblins ane been better
Than you this day.

'Tis very true, my sovereign King,
My skill may weel be doubted ;
But facts are chiels that winna ding,
An' downa be disputed :
Your royal nest, beneath your wing,
Is e'en right reft an' clouted,
And now the third part o' the string,
An' less, will gang about it
Than did ae day.

Far be't frae me that I aspire
To blame your legislation,
Or say, ye wisdom want, or fire
To rule this mighty nation :
But faith! I muckle doubt, my sire,
Ye've trusted ministration
To chaps wha in a barn or byre
Wad better fill'd their station,
Than courts yon day.

And now ye've gien auld Britain peace,
Her broken shins to plaister ;
Your sair taxation does her fleece,
Till she has scarce a tester :
For me, thank God, my life's a lease,
Nae bargain wearin faster,
Or faith! I fear, that, wi' the geese,
I shortly boost to pasture
I' the craft some day.

I'm no mistrusting Willie Pitt,
When taxes he enlarges,
(An' Will's a true guid fallow's get,
A name not envy spairges),
That he intends to pay your debt,
An' lessen a' your charges ;
But, G—d sake! let nae saving fit
Abridge your bonie barges
An' boats this day.

Adieu, my Liege! may Freedom geck
Beneath your high protection ;
An' may ye rax Corruption's neck,
And gie her for dissection!
But since I'm here, I'll no neglect,
In loyal, true affection,
To pay your Queen, wi' due respect,
My fealty an' subjection
This great birthday.

Hail, Majesty most Excellent!
While nobles strive to please ye,
Will ye accept a compliment,
A simple poet gies ye?
Thae bonie bairntime, Heav'n has lent,
Still higher may they heeze ye
In bliss, till fate some day is sent,
For ever to release ye
Frae care that day.

For you, young Potentate o' Wales,
I tell your Highness fairly,
Down Pleasure's stream, wi' swelling sails,
I'm tauld ye're driving rarely ;
But some day ye may gnaw your nails,
An' curse your folly sairly,
That e'er ye brak Diana's pales,
Or rattl'd dice wi' Charlie
By night or day.

Yet aft a ragged cowt's been known,
To mak a noble aiver ;
So, ye may doucely fill a throne,
For a' their clish-ma-claver :
There, him at Agincourt wha shone,
Few better were or braver ,
And yet, wi' funny, queer Sir John,
He was an unco shaver
For mony a day.

For you, right rev'rend Osnaburg,
Nane sets the lawn-sleeve sweeter,
Altho' a ribban at your lug
Wad been a dress completer :
As ye disown yon paughty dog,
That bears the keys of Peter,
Then swith! an' get a wife to hug,
Or trowth, ye'll stain the mitre
Some luckless day!

Young, royal "tarry-breeks," I learn,
Ye've lately come athwart her—
A glorious galley, stem and stern,
Well rigg'd for Venus' barter ;
But first hang out that she'll discern
Your hymeneal charter ;
Then heave aboard your grapple-airn,
An' large upon her quarter,
Come full that day.

Ye, lastly, bonie blossoms a',
 Ye royal lasses dainty,
 Heav'n mak ye guid as weel as braw,
 An' gie you lads a-plenty!
 But sneer na British boys awa!
 For kings are unco scant ay,
 An' German gentles are but sma'.
 They're better just than want ay
 On ony day.

God bless you a'! consider now,
 Ye're unco muckle dautet;
 But ere the course o' life be through,
 It may be bitter sautet:
 An' I hae seen their coggie fou,
 That yet hae tarrow't at it.
 But or the day was done, I trow,
 The leggen they hae clautet
 Fu' clean that day.

A DEDICATION.⁷³

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

EXPECT na, sir, in this narration,
 A fleechin, fleth'rin Dedication,
 To roose you up, an' ca' you guid,
 An' sprung o' great an' noble bluid,
 Because ye're surnam'd like His Grace—
 Perhaps related to the race:
 Then, when I'm tir'd—and sae are ye,
 Wi' mony a fulsome, sinfu' lie,
 Set up a face how I stop short,
 For fear your modesty be hurt.

This may do—maun do, sir, wi' them wha
 Maun please the great-folk for a wamefou;
 For me! sae laigh I need na bow,
 For, Lord be thanket, I can plough;

And when I downa yoke a naig,
Then, Lord be thanket, I can beg ;
Sae I shall say—an' that's nae flatt'rin—
It's just sic poet an' sic' patron.

The Poet, some guid angel help him,
Or else, I fear, some ill ane skelp him !
He may do weel for a' he's done yet,
But only—he's no just begun yet.

The Patron (sir, ye maun forgie me ;
I winna he, come what will o' me),
On ev'ry hand it will allow'd be,
He's just—nae better than he shou'd be.

I readily and freely grant
He downa see a poor man want ;
What's no his ain, he winna tak it ;
What ance he says, he winna break it ;
Ought he can lend he'll no refus't,
Till aft his guidness is abus'd ;
And rascals whyles that do him wrang,
Ev'n that, he does na mind it lang ,
As master, landlord, husband, father,
He does na fail his part in either.

But then, nae thanks to him for a' that ;
Nae godly symptom ye can ca' that ;
It's naething but a milder feature
Of our poor, sinfu', corrupt nature :
Ye'll get the best o' moral works,
'Mang black Gentoos, and pagan Turks,
Or hunters wild on Ponataxi,
Wha never heard of orthodoxy.
That he's the poor man's friend in need
The gentleman in word and deed,
It's no thro' terror of d-mn-t-n ;
It's just a carnal inclination.

Morality, thou deadly bane,
 Thy tens o' thousands thou hast slain!
 Vain is his hope, whase stay an' trust is
 In moral mercy, truth, and justice!

No—stretch a point to catch a plack;
 Abuse a brother to his back;
 Steal thro' the winnock frae a whore,
 But point the rake that tak's the door;
 Be to the poor like onie whunstane,
 And haud their noses to the grunstone;
 Ply ev'ry art o' legal thieving;
 No matter—stick to sound believing.

Learn three-mile pray'rs, an' half-mile graces,
 Wi' weel-spread looves, an' lang, wry faces;
 Grunt up a solemn, lengthen'd groan,
 And damn a' parties but your own;
 I'll warrant, then ye're nae deceiver,
 A steady, sturdy, staunch believer.

O ye wha leave the springs o' Calvin,
 For gumlie dubs of your ain delvin!
 Ye sons of Heresy and Error,
 Ye'll some day squeel in quaking terror,
 When Vengeance draws the sword in wrath,
 And in the fire throws the sheath;
 When Ruin, with his sweeping besom,
 Just frets till Heav'n commission gies him;
 While o'er the harp pale Misery moans,
 And strikes the ever-deep'ning tones,
 Still louder shrieks, and heavier groans!

Your pardon, sir, for this digression:
 I maist forgat my Dedication;
 But when Divinity comes 'cross me,
 My readers still are sure to lose me.

So, sir, you see 'twas nae daft vapour;
 But I maturely thought it proper,

When a' my works I did review,
 To dedicate them, sir, to you :
 Because (ye need na tak' it ill),
 I thought them something like yoursel.

Then patronize them wi' your favor,
 And your petitioner shall ever ——
 I had amaist said, ever pray,
 But that's a word I need na say ,
 For prayin I hae little skill o't ,
 I'm baith dead-sweer, an' wretched ill o't ;
 But I'se repeat each poor man's pray'r,
 That kens or hears about you, Sir——

“ May ne'er Misfortune's growling bark,
 Howl thro' the dwelling o' the clerk !
 May ne'er his gen'rous, honest heart,
 For that same gen'rous spirit smart !
 May Kennedy's far-honor'd name
 Lang beet his hymeneal flame,
 Till Hamiltons, at least a dizzen,
 Are frae their nuptial labors risen :
 Five bonie lasses round their table,
 And sev'n braw fellows, stout an' able,
 To serve their king an' country weel,
 By word, or pen, or pointed steel !
 May health and peace, with mutual rays,
 Shine on the ev'ning o' his days ,
 Till his wee, curlie John's ier-oe,
 When ebbing life nae mair shall flow,
 The last, sad, mournful rites bestow ! ”

I will not wind a lang conclusion,
 With complimentary effusion ;
 But whilst your wishes and endeavours
 Are blest with Fortune's smiles and favours,
 I am, dear sir, with zeal most fervent,
 Your much indebted, humble servant.

But if (which Pow'rs above prevent)
 That iron-hearted carl, Want,
 Attended, in his grim advances,
 By sad mistakes, and black mischances,
 While hopes, and joys, and pleasures fly him,
 Make you as poor a dog as I am,
 Your "humble servant" then no more ;
 For who would humbly serve the poor ?
 But, by a poor man's hopes in Heav'n
 While recollection's pow'r is giv'n—
 If, in the vale of humble life,
 The victim sad of fortune's strife,
 I, thro' the tender gushing tear,
 Should recognise my master dear ;
 If friendless, low, we meet together,
 Then, sir, your hand—my friend and brother !

VERSIFIED NOTE TO DR. MACKENZIE, MAUCHLINE.⁷⁴

FRIDAY first's the day appointed
 By the Right Worshipful anointed,
 To hold our grand procession ;
 To get a blad o' Johnie's morals,
 And taste a swatch o' Manson's barrels
 I' the way of our profession.

The Master and the Brotherhood
 Would a' be glad to see you ;
 For me I wad be mair than proud
 To share the mercies wi' you.
 If Death, then, wi' skaith, then,
 Some mortal heart is hechtin,
 Inform him, and storm him,
 That Saturday you'll fecht him.

ROBERT BURNS.

THE FAREWELL.⁷⁵

THE BRETHREN OF ST JAMES'S LODGE, TARBOLTON.

Tune—"Good-night, and joy be wi' you a'."

ADIEU! a heart-warm, fond adieu;

Dear brothers of the *mystic tye*!Ye favoured, ye *enlighten'd* few,

Companions of my social joy,

Tho' I to foreign lands must hie,

Pursuing Fortune's slidd'ry ba' ;

With melting heart, and brimful eye,

I'll mind you still, tho' far awa

Oft have I met your social band,

And spent the cheerful, festive night :

Oft, honour'd with supreme command,

Presided o'er the *sons of light* :And by that *hieroglyphic* bright,Which none but *Craftsmen* ever saw!

Strong Mem'ry on my heart shall write

Those happy scenes, when far awa.

May Freedom, Harmony, and Love,

Unite you in the *grand Design*,

Beneath th' Omniscient Eye above—

The glorious *Architect* Divine,That you may keep th' *unerring line*,Still rising by the *plummet's law*,Till *Order* bright completely shine,

Shall be my pray'r when far awa.

And *you*, farewell! whose merits claimJustly that *highest badge* to wear:

Heav'n bless your honour'd, noble name,

To *Masonry* and *Scotia* dear!

A last request permit me here,—

When yearly ye assemble a',

One *round*, I ask it with a *tear*,To him, the *Bard that's far awa*.

ON A SCOTCH BARD.⁷⁶

GONE TO THE WEST INDIES.

A' YE wha live by sowps o' drink,
 A' ye wha live by crambo-clink,
 A' ye wha live and never think,
 Come, mourn wi' me!
 Our billie's gien us a' a jink,
 An'.owre the sea!

Lament him a' ye rantin core,
 Wha dearly like a random-splore;
 Nae mair he'll join the merry roar,
 In social key;
 For now he's taen anither shore,
 An' owre the sea!

The bonie lasses weel may wiss him,
 And in their dear petitions place him:
 The widows, wives, an' a' may bless him
 Wi' tearfu' e'e;
 For weel I wat they'll sairly miss him
 That's owre the sea!

O Fortune, they hae room to grumble!
 Hadst thou taen aff some drowsy bummle,
 Wha can do nought but fyke an' fumble,
 'Twad been nae plea;
 But he was gleg as onie wumble,
 That's owre the sea!

Auld, cantie Kyle, may weepers wear,
 An' stain them wi' the saut, saut tear:
 'Twill mak her poor auld heart, I fear,
 In flinders flee:
 He was her Laureat monie a year,
 That's owre the sea.

He saw Misfortune's cauld nor-west
Lang mustering up a bitter blast ;
A jillet brak his heart at last,
 Ill may she be !
So, took a berth afore the mast,
 An' owre thê sea.

To tremble under Fortune's cummock,
On scarce a bellyfu' o' drummock,
Wi' his proud, independent stomach,
 Could ill agree ;
So, row't his hurdies in a hammock,
 An' owre the sea.

He ne'er was gien to great misguidin,
Yet coin his pouches wad na bide in ;
Wi' him it ne'er was under hidin ;
 He dealt it free :
The Muse was a' that he took pride in,
 That's owre the sea.

Jamaica bodies, use him weel,
An' hap him in a cozie biel :
Ye'll find him ay a dainty chiel,
 An' fou o' glee :
He wad na wrang'd the vera deil,
 That's owre the sea.

Fareweel my rhyme-composing billie !
Your native soil was right ill-willie ;
But may ye flourish like a lily,
 Now bonilie !
I'll toast you in my hindmost gillie,
 Tho' owre the sea !

FAREWELL TO ELIZA.⁷⁷*Tune*—"Gilderoy."

FROM thee, Eliza, I must go,
 And from my native shore ;
 The cruel fates between us throw
 A boundless ocean's roar :
 But boundless oceans, roaring wide,
 Between my love and me,
 They never, never can divide
 My heart and soul from thee.

Farewell, farewell, Eliza dear,
 The maid that I adore !
 A boding voice is in mine ear,
 We part to meet no more !
 But the latest throb that leaves my heart,
 While Death stands victor by,--
 That throb, Eliza, is thy part,
 And thine that latest sigh !

A BARD'S EPITAPH.⁷⁸

Is there a whim-inspired fool,
 Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,
 Owre blate to seek, owre proud to snool,
 Let him draw near ;
 And owre this grassy heap sing dool,
 And drap a tear.

Is there a bard of rustic song,
 Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,
 That weekly this area throng,
 O, pass not by !
 But, with a frater-feeling strong,
 Here, heave a sigh.

Is there a man, whose judgment clear
 Can others teach the course to steer,
 Yet runs, himself, life's mad career,
 Wild as the wave,
 Here pause—and, thro' the starting tear,
 Survey this grave.

The poor inhabitant below
 Was quick to learn and wise to know,
 And keenly felt the friendly glow,
 And softer flame;
 But thoughtless follies laid him low,
 And stain'd his name!

Reader, attend! whether thy soul
 Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,
 Or darkling grubs this earthly hole,
 In low pursuit,
 Know, prudent, cautious, self-control
 Is wisdom's root.

EPITAPH FOR ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ.⁷²

KNOW thou, O stranger to the fame
 Of this much lov'd, much honoured name!
 (For none that knew him need be told)
 A warmer heart death ne'er made cold.

EPITAPH FOR GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

THE poor man weeps—here Gavin sleeps,
 Whom canting wretches blam'd;
 But with such as he, where'er he be,
 May I be sav'd or d—d!

EPITAPH ON "WEE JOHNNIE." ⁸⁰*Hic Jacet wee Johnnie.*

WHOE'ER thou art, O reader, know
 That Death has murder'd Johnnie;
 An' here his *body* lies fu' low;
 For *saul* he ne'er had ony.

THE LASS O' BALLOCHMYLE.⁸¹*Tune—"Ettrick Banks."*

'Twas even- the dewy fields were green,
 On every blade the pearls hang;
 The zephyr wanton'd round the bean,
 And bore its fragrant sweets along:
 In ev'ry glen the mavis sang,
 All nature list'ning seem'd the while,
 Except where greenwood echoes rang,
 Among the braes o' Ballochmyle.

With careless step I onward stray'd,
 My heart rejoic'd in nature's joy,
 When, musing in a lonely glade,
 A maiden fair I chanc'd to spy:
 Her look was like the morning's eye,
 Her air like nature's vernal smile;
 Perfection whisper'd, passing by,
 "Behold the lass o' Ballochmyle!"

Fair is the morn in flowery May,
 And sweet is night in autumn mild;
 When roving thro' the garden gay,
 Or wand'ring in the lonely wild:
 But woman, nature's darling child!
 There all her charms she does compile;
 Even there her other works are foil'd
 By the bonie lass o' Ballochmyle.

O had she been a country maid,
 And I the happy country swain,
 Tho' shelter'd in the lowest shed
 That ever rose on Scotland's plain!
 Thro' weary winter's wind and rain,
 With joy, with rapture, I would toil;
 And nightly to my bosom strain
 The bonie lass o' Ballochmyle.

Then pride might climb the slipp'ry steep,
 Where fame and honors lofty shine,
 And thirst of gold might tempt the deep,
 Or downward seek the Indian mine:
 Give me the cot below the pine,
 To tend the flocks or till the soil;
 And ev'ry day have joys divine
 With the bonie lass o' Ballochmyle.

LINES TO MR JOHN KENNEDY.

FAREWELL, dear friend! may gude luck hit you,
 And 'mang her favourites admit you:
 If e'er Detraction shore to smit you,
 May nane believe him,
 And ony deil that thinks to get you,
 Good Lord, deceive him!

LINES TO AN OLD SWEETHEART.⁸²

ONCE fondly lov'd, and still remember'd dear,
 Sweet early object of my youthful vows,
 Accept this mark of friendship, warm, sincere,
 Friendship! 'tis all cold duty now allows.

And when you read the simple artless rhymes,
 One friendly sigh for him—he asks no more,
 Who, distant, burns in flaming torrid climes,
 Or haply lies beneath th' Atlantic roar.

LINES WRITTEN ON A BANK-NOTE.

WAE worth thy power, thou cursed leaf,
 Fell source o' a' my woe and grief ;
 For lack o' thee I've lost my lass,
 For lack o' thee I scrimp my glass :
 I see the children of affliction
 Unaided, through thy curst restriction :
 I've seen the oppressor's cruel smile
 Amid his hapless victim's spoil ;
 And for thy potence vainly wished,
 To crush the villain in the dust :
 For lack o' thee, I leave this much-lov'd shore,
 Never, perhaps, to greet old Scotland more

KYLE.

R. B.

STANZAS ON NAETHING.

EXTEMPORE EPISTLE TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

To you, sir, this summons I've sent,
 Pray, whip till the pownie is fraething ;
 But if you demand what I want,
 I honestly answer you--naething.

Ne'er scorn a poor Poet like me,
 For idly just living and breathing,
 While people of every degree
 Are busy employed about--naething.

Poor Centum-per-centum may fast,
 And grumble his hurdies their claitthing,
 He'll find, when the balance is cast,
 He's gane to the devil for--naething.

The courtier cringes and bows,
 Ambition has likewise its plaything ;
 A coronet beams on his brows ;
 And what is a coronet ?--naething.

Some quarrel the Presbyter gown,
 Some quarrel Episcopal graithing ;
 But every good fellow will own
 The quarrel is a' about—naething.

The lover may sparkle and glow,
 Approaching his bonie bit gay thing ;
 But marriage will soon let him know
 He's gotten—a buskit up naething.

The Poet may jingle and rhyme,
 In hopes of a laureate wreathing,
 And when he has wasted his time,
 He's kindly rewarded wi' - n, e' i g

The thundering bully may rage,
 And swagger and swear like a heathen ;
 But collar him fast, I'll engage,
 You'll find that his courage is—naething.

Last night wi' a feminine whig—
 A poet she couldna put faith in ;
 But soon we grew lovingly big,
 I taught her, her terrors were naething.

Her whigship was wonderful pleased,
 But charmingly tickled wi' ae thing ,
 Her fingers I lovingly squeezed,
 And kissed her, and promised her—naething.

The priest anathemas may threat—
 Predicament, sir, that we're baith in ,
 But when honor's reveillè is beat,
 The holy artillery's n, e' i g

And now I must mount on the wave—
 My voyage perhaps there is death in ;
 But what is a watery grave ?
 The drowning a Poet is naething.

And now, as grim death's in my thought,
 To you, sir, I make this bequeathing ;
 My service as long as ye've ought,
 And my friendship, by God, when ye've naething

THE FAREWELL.

The valiant, in himself, what can he suffer?
 Or what does he regard his single woes?
 But when, alas! he multiplies himself,
 To dearer selves, to the lov'd tender fair,
 To those whose bliss, whose beings hang upon him,
 To helpless children,—then, oh then he feels
 The point of misery festering in his heart,
 And weakly weeps his fortunes like a coward:
 Such, such am I!—undone!—THOMSON'S *Edward and Eleanor*.

FAREWELL, old Scotia's bleak domains,
 Far dearer than the torrid plains,
 Where rich ananas blow!
 Farewell, a mother's blessing dear!
 A brother's sigh! a sister's tear!
 My Jean's heart-rending throe!
 Farewell, my Bess! tho' thou'rt bereft
 Of my paternal care,
 A faithful brother I have left,
 My part in him thou'lt share!
 Adieu, too, to you too,
 My Smith, my bosom frien';
 When kindly you mind me,
 O then befriend my Jean!

What bursting anguish tears my heart;
 From thee, my Jeany, must I part?
 Thou, weeping, answ'rest—"No!"
 Alas! misfortune stares my face,
 And points to ruin and disgrace,
 I for thy sake must go!
 Thee, Hamilton, and Aiken dear,
 A grateful, warm adieu:
 I, with a much-indebted tear,
 Shall still remember you!
 All hail then, the gale then,
 Wafts me from thee, dear shore!
 It rustles, and whistles
 I'll never see thee more!

THE CALF.⁸³

To the Rev. JAMES STEVEN, on his text, MALACHI, chap. iv. ver. 2—
 "And ye shall go forth, and grow up as CALVES of the stall."

RIGHT, sir! your text I'll prove it true,
 Tho' heretics may laugh;
 For instance, there's yoursel just now,
 God knows, an unco calf.

And should some patron be so kind,
 As bless you wi' a kirk,
 I doubt na, sir, but then we'll find,
 Ye're still as great a *stirk*.

But if the lover's raptur'd hour,
 Shall ever be your lot,
 Forbid it, ev'ry heavenly Power,
 You e'er should be a *stot*!

Tho', when some kind connubial dear
 Your but-an'-ben adorns,
 The like has been that—you may wear
 A noble head of *horns*.

And, in your lug, most reverend James,
 To hear you roar and rowte,
 Few men o' sense will doubt your claims
 To rank amang the *nowte*.

And when ye're number'd wi' the dead,
 Below a grassy hillock,
 With justice they may mark your head—
 "Here lies a famous *bullock*!"

NATURE'S LAW—A POEM.

HUMBLY INSCRIBED TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

"Great Nature spoke; observant man obey'd."—POPE.

LET other heroes boast their scars,
 The marks of strut and strife;
 And other poets sing of wars,
 The plagues of human life;

Shame fa' the fun ; wi' sword and gun
To slap mankind like lumber !
I sing his name, and nobler fame,
Wha multiplies our number.

Great Nature spoke, with air benign,
" Go on, ye human race ;
This lower world I you resign ;
Be fruitful and increase.
The liquid fire of strong desire
I've poured it in each bosom ;
Here, on this hand, does Mankind stand,
And there is Beauty's blossom."

The Hero of these artless strains,
A lowly bard was he,
Who sung his rhymes in Coila's plains,
With meikle mirth an' glee ;
Kind Nature's care had given his share
Large, of the flaming current ,
And, all devout, he never sought
To stem the sacred torrent.

He felt the powerful, high behest
Thrill, vital, thro' and thro' ;
And sought a correspondent breast,
To give obedience due :
Propitious Powers screen'd the young flow'rs,
From mildews of abortion ;
And lo! the bard—a great reward—
Has got a double portion !

Auld cantie Coil may count the day,
As annual it returns,
The third of Libra's equal sway,
That gave another Burns,
With future rhymes, an' other times,
To emulate his sire ;
To sing auld Coil in nobler style,
With more poetic fire.

Ye Powers of peace, and peaceful song,
Look down with gracious eyes ;
And bless auld Coila, large and long,
With multiplying joys ;
Lang may she stand to prop the land,
The flow'r of ancient nations ;
And Burnses spring, her fame to sing,
To endless generations !

WILLIE CHALMERS.⁸⁴

Wi' braw new branks in mickle pride,
And eke a braw new brechan,
My Pegasus I'm got astride,
And up Parnassus pechin ;
Whiles owre a bush wi' downward crush,
The doited beastie stammers ;
Then up he gets, and off he sets,
For sake o' Willie Chalmers.

I doubt na, lass, that weel kenn'd name
May cost a pair o' blushes ;
I am nae stranger to his fame,
Nor his warm urgèd wishes.
Your bonie face, sae mild and sweet,
His honest heart enamours,
And faith ye'll no be lost a whit,
Tho' wair'd on Willie Chalmers

Auld Truth hersel might swear ye're fair,
And Honour safely back her ;
And Modesty assume your air,
And ne'er a ane mistak her :
And sic twa love-inspiring een
Might fire even holy palmers ;
Nae wonder then they've fatal been
To honest Willie Chalmers.

I doubt na fortune may you shore
 Some mim-mou'd pouter'd priestie,
 Fu' lifted up wi' Hebrew lore,
 And band upon his breastie .
 But oh! what signifies to you
 His lexicons and grammars ,
 The feeling heart's the royal blue,
 And that's wi' Willie Chalmers.

Some gapin', glowrin countra laird
 May warsle for your favour ;
 May claw his lug, and straik his beard,
 And hoast up some palaver :
 My bonie maid, before ye wed
 Sic clumsy-witted hammers,
 Seek Heaven for help, and barefit skelp
 Awa wi' Willie Chalmers.

Forgive the Bard! my fond regard
 For ane that shares my bosom,
 Inspires my Muse to gie 'm his dues,
 For deil a hair I roose him.
 May powers aboon unite you soon,
 And fructify your amours,
 And every year come in mair dear
 To you and Willie Chalmers.

REPLY TO A TRIMMING EPISTLE RECEIVED FROM A TAILOR.⁸⁵

WHAT ails ye now, ye lousie bitch,
 To thresh my back at sic a pitch ?
 Losh, man! hae mercy wi' your natch,
 Your bodkin's bauld ;
 I didna suffer half sae much
 Frae Daddie Auld.

What tho' at times, when I grow crouse,
 I gie their wames a random pouse,
 Is that enough for you to souse

Your servant sae ?

Gae mind your seam, ye prick-the-louse,
 An' jag-the-flea!

King David, o' poetic brief,
 Wrocht 'mang the lasses sic mischief
 As fill'd his after-life wi' grief,

An' bludy rants,

An' yet he's rank'd amang the chief

O' lang-sync saunts.

And maybe, Tam, for a' my cants,
 My wicked rhymes, an' drucken rants,
 I'll gie auld cloven Cloutie's haunts

An unco slip yet,

An' snugly sit amang the saunts,

At Davie's hip yet!

But, fegs! the Session says I maun

Gae fa' upo' anither plan

Than garrin lasses coup the cran,

Clean heels owre body,

An' sairly thole their mother's ban

Afore the howdy.

This leads me on to tell for sport,

How I did wi' the Session sort ;

Auld Clinkum, at the inner port,

Cried three times, " Robin !

Come hither lad, and answer for't,

Ye're blam'd for jobbin !"

Wi' pinch I put a Sunday's face on,

An' snoov'd awa' before the Session :

I made an open, fair confession—

I scorn'd to lee,

An' syne Mess John, beyond expression,

Fell foul o' me.

A fornicator-lown he call'd me,
 An' said my faut frae bliss expell'd me ;
 I own'd the tale was true he tell'd me,
 " But, what the matter ?
 (Quo' I) I fear unless ye geld me,
 I'll ne'er be better !"

" Geld you ! (quo' he) an' what for no ?
 If that your right hand, leg, or toe
 Should ever prove your spiritual foe,
 You should remember
 To cut it aff—an' what for no ?—
 Your dearest member !"

" Na, na (quo' I), I'm no for that,
 Gelding's nae better than 'tis ca't ;
 I'd rather suffer for my faut,
 A hearty flewit,
 As sair owre hip as ye can draw't,
 Tho' I should rue it."

" Or, gin ye like to end the bother,
 To please us a'—I've just ae ither—
 When next wi' yon lass I forgather,
 Whate'er betide it,
 I'll frankly gie her 't a' thegither,
 An' let her guide it."

But, sir, this pleas'd them warst of a',
 An' therefore, Tam, when that I saw,
 I said " Gude night," an' cam' awa',
 An' left the Session ;
 I saw they were resolv'd a'
 On my oppression.

THE BRIGS OF AYR.²⁶

INSCRIBED TO JOHN BALLANTINE, ESQ., AYR.

THE simple Bard, rough at the rustic plough,
 Learning his tuneful trade from ev'ry bough ;
 The chanting linnet, or the mellow thrush,
 Hailing the setting sun, sweet, in the green thorn bush ;
 The soaring lark, the perching red-breast shrill,
 Or deep-ton'd plovers grey, wild-whistling o'er the hill ;
 Shall he—nurst in the peasant's lowly shed,
 To hardy independence bravely bred,
 By early poverty to hardship steel'd,
 And train'd to arms in stern Misfortune's field—
 Shall he be guilty of their hireling crimes,
 The servile, mercenary Swiss of rhymes ?
 Or labour hard the panegyric close,
 With all the venal soul of dedicating prose ?
 No! though his artless strains he rudely sings,
 And throws his hand uncouthly o'er the strings,
 He glows with all the spirit of the Bard,
 Fame, honest fame, his great, his dear reward.
 Still, if some patron's gen'rous care he trace,
 Skill'd in the secret to bestow with grace ;
 When Ballantine befriends his humble name,
 And hands the rustic stranger up to fame,
 With heartfelt throes his grateful bosom swells,
 The godlike bliss, to give, alone excels.

'Twas when the stacks get on their winter hap,
 And thack and rape secure the toil-won crap :
 Potatoe bings are snuggèd up frae skaith
 O' coming Winter's biting, frosty breath ;
 The bees, rejoicing o'er their summer toils,
 Unnumber'd buds an' flow'rs' delicious spoils,
 Seal'd up with frugal care in massive waxen piles,
 Are doom'd by Man, that tyrant o'er the weak,
 The death o' devils, smoor'd wi' brimstone reek :

The thundering guns are heard on ev'ry side,
 The wounded coveys, reeling, scatter wide ;
 The feather'd field-mates, bound by Nature's tie,
 Sires, mothers, children, in one carnage lie :
 (What warm, poetic heart but inly bleeds,
 And execrates man's savage, ruthless deeds!)
 Nae mair the flow'r in field or meadow springs,
 Nae mair the grove with airy concert rings,
 Except perhaps the Robin's whistling glee,
 Proud o' the height o' some bit half-lang tree :
 The hoary morns precede the sunny days,
 Mild, calm, serene, wide spreads the noontide blaze,
 While thick the gossamour waves wanton in the rays.

'Twas in that season, when a simple Bard,
 Unknown and poor—simplicity's reward!—
 Ae night, within the ancient brugh of Ayr,
 By whim inspir'd, or haply prest wi' care,
 He left his bed, and took his wayward route,
 And down by *Simpson's*^a wheel'd the left about :
 (Whether impell'd by all-directing Fate,
 To witness what I after shall narrate ;
 Or whether, rapt in meditation high,
 He wander'd out, he knew not where nor why :)
 The drowsy Dungeon-clock^b had number'd two,
 And Wallace Tower^c had sworn the fact was true :
 The tide-swoln firth, with sullen-sounding roar,
 Through the still night dash'd hoarse along the shore.
 All else was hush'd as Nature's closèd e'e ;
 The silent moon shone high o'er tower and tree ,
 The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
 Crept gently, crusting-o'er the glittering stream—

When, lo! on either hand the list'ning Bard,
 The clanging sugh of whistlings wings is heard
 Two dusky forms dart thro' the midnight air,
 Swift as the gos drives on the wheeling hare ;

Ane on th' Auld Brig his airy shape uprears.
The ither flutters o'er the rising piers :
Our warlock Rhymer instantly descried
The Sprites that o'er the Brigs of Ayr preside.
 (That Bards are second-sighted is nae joke,
 And ken the lingo of the sp'ntual folk ,
 Fays, Spunkies, Kelpies, a', they can explain them,
 And ev'n the vera deils they brawly ken them)
 " Auld Brig " appear'd of ancient Pictish race,
 The very wrinkles Gothic in his face ;
 He seem'd as he wi' Time had warstl'd lang,
 Yet, teughly doure, he bade an unco bang.
 ' New Brig " was buskit in a braw new coat,
 That he, at Lon'on, frae ane Adams got ;
 In's hand five taper staves as smooth's a bead,
 Wi' virls an' whirlygigums at the head.
 The Goth was stalking round with anxious search,
 Spying the time-worn flaws in ev'ry arch ,
 It chanc'd his new-come neibor took his e'e,
 And e'en a vex'd and angry heart had he !
 Wi' thieveless sneer to see his modish mien,
 He, down the water, gies him this guid-een :—

AULD BRIG.

I doubt na, frien', ye'll think ye're nae sheepshank,
 Ance ye were streekit owre frae bank to bank !
 But gin ye be a brig as auld as me—
 Tho' faith, that date, I doubt, ye'll never see—
 There'll be, if that day come, I'll wad a boddle,
 Some fewer whignaleeries in your noddle.

NEW BRIG

Auld Vandal! ye but show your little mense,
 Just much about it wi' your scanty sense
 Will your poor, narrow foot-path of a street,
 Where twa wheel-barrows tremble when they meet,
 Your ruin'd, formless bulk o' stane and lime,
 Compare wi' bonie brigs o' modern time ?

There's men o' taste wou'd tak the Ducat stream,^a
 Tho' they should cast the vera sark and swim,
 E'er they would grate their feelings wi' the view
 O' sic an ugly, Gothic hulk as you.

AULD BRIG.

Conceited gowk! puff'd up wi' windy pride!
 This mony a year I've stood the flood an' tide;
 And tho' wi' crazy eild I'm sair forfairn,
 I'll be a brig when ye're a shapeless cairn!
 As yet ye little ken about the matter,
 But twa-three winters will inform ye better.
 When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains,
 Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;
 When from the hills where springs the brawling Coil,
 Or stately Lugar's mossy fountains boil;
 Or where the Greenock winds his moorland course,
 Or haunted Garpal^e draws his feeble source,
 Arous'd by blustering winds an' spotting throwes,
 In mony a torrent down the snaw-broo rowes;
 While crashing ice, borne on the roaring spate,
 Sweeps dams, an' mills, an' brigs, a' to the gate;
 And from Glenbuck,^f down to the Ratton-key,^g
 Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd, tumbling sea—
 Then down ye'll hurl (deil nor ye never rise!)
 And dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies!
 A lesson sadly teaching, to your cost,
 That Architecture's noble art is lost!

NEW BRIG.

Fine architecture, trowth, I needs must say't o't,
 The L—d be thankit that we've tint the gate o't!
 Gaunt, ghastly, ghaist-alluring edifices,
 Hanging with threat'ning jut like precipices;
 O'er-arching, mouldy, gloom-inspiring coves,
 Supporting roofs, fantastic, stony groves;
 Windows and doors in nameless sculptures drest,
 With order, symmetry, or taste unblest;

Forms like some bedlam Statuary's dream,
 The craz'd creations of misguided whim ;
 Forms might be worshipp'd on the bended knee,
 And still the second dread command be free ;
 Their likeness is not found on earth, in air, or sea !
 Mansions that would disgrace the building taste
 Of any mason reptile, bird or beast :
 Fit only for a doited monkish race,
 Or frosty maids forsworn the dear embrace,
 Or cuifs of later times, wha held the notion,
 That sullen gloom was sterling true devotion :
 Fancies that our guid Brugh denies protection,
 And soon may they expire, unblest wi' resurrection !

AULD BRIG.

O ye, my dear-remember'd, ancient yealings,
 Were ye but here to share my wounded feelings !
 Ye worthy Proveses, an' mony a Bailie,
 Wha in the paths o' righteousness did toil ay ;
 Ye dainty Deacons, an' ye douce Conveeners,
 To whom our moderns are but causey-cleaners ;
 Ye godly Councils, wha hae blest this town ;
 Ye godly Brethren o' the sacred gown,
 Wha meekly gie your hurdies to the smiters ;
 And (what would now be strange), ye godly Writers ;
 A' ye douce folk I've born aboon the broo,
 Were ye but here, what would ye say or do ?
 How would your spirits groan in deep vexation,
 To see each melancholy alteration ;
 And, agonising, curse the time and place
 When ye begat the base degenerate race !
 Nae langer rev'rend men, their country's glory,
 In plain braid Scots hold forth a plain, braid story ;
 Nae langer thrifty citizens, an' douce,
 Meet owre a pint, or in the Council-house ;
 But staumrel, corky-headed, graceless *Gentry*,
 The herryment and run of the country .

Men, three-parts made by tailors and by barbers,
 Wha waste your weel-hain'd gear on d—'d new brigs and
 harbours!

NEW BRIG.

Now haud you there! for faith ye've said enough,
 And muckle mair than ye can mak to through.
 As for your Priesthood, I shall say but little,
Corbies and *Clergy* are a shot right kittle:
 But, under favour o' your langer beard,
 Abuse o' Magistrates might weel be spar'd;
 To liken them to your auld-warld squad,
 I must needs say, comparisons are odd.
 In Ayr, *wag-wits* nae mair can hae a handle
 To mouth "a Citizen" a term o' scandal;
 Nae mair the Council waddles down the street,
 In all the pomp of ignorant conceit;
 Men wha grew wise priggin owre hops an' raisins,
 Or gather'd lib'ral views in Bonds and Seisins:
 If haply Knowledge, on a random tramp,
 Had shor'd them with a glimmer of his lamp,
 And would to Common-sense for once betray'd them,
 Plain, dull Stupidity stept kindly in to aid them.

What farther clish-ma-claver might been said,
 What bloody wars, if Sprites had blood to shed,
 No man can tell; but, all before their sight,
 A fairy train appear'd in order bright;
 Adown the glittering stream they featly danc'd;
 Bright to the moon their various dresses glanc'd:
 They footed o'er the wat'ry glass so neat,
 The infant ice scarce bent beneath their feet:
 While arts of Minstrelsy among them rung,
 And soul-ennobling Bards heroic ditties sung.

O had M'Lauchlan,^a thairm-inspiring sage,
 Been there to hear this heavenly band engage,
 When thro' his dear strathspeys they bore with Highland
 rage;

Or when they struck old Scotia's melting airs,
 The lover's raptured joys or bleeding cares ;
 How would his Highland lug been nobler fir'd,
 And ev'n his matchless hand with finer touch inspir'd !
 No guess could tell what instrument appear'd,
 But all the soul of Music's self was heard ;
 Harmonious concert rung in every part,
 While simple melody pour'd moving on the heart.

The Genius of the Stream in front appears.
 A venerable Chief advanc'd in years ;
 His hoary head with water-lilies crown'd,
 His manly leg with garter-tangle bound.
 Next came the loveliest pair in all the ring,
 Sweet female Beauty hand in hand with Spring ;
 Then, crown'd with flow'ry hay, came Rural Joy,
 And Summer, with his fervid-beaming eye ;
 All-cheering Plenty, with her flowing horn,
 Led yellow Autumn wreath'd with nodding corn ;
 Then Winter's time-bleach'd locks did hoary show,
 By Hospitality with cloudless brow .
 Next followed Courage with his martial stride,
 From where the Feal wild-woody coverts hide ;
 Benevolence, with mild, benignant air,
 A female form, came from the tow'rs of Stair ;
 Learning and Worth in equal measures strode,
 From simple Catrine, their long-lov'd abode ;
 Last, white-rob'd Peace, crown'd with a hazel wreath,
 To rustic Agriculture did bequeath
 The broken, iron instruments of death :
 At sight of whom our Sprites forgot their kindling wrath

THE NIGHT WAS STILL.⁸⁷

THE night was still, and o'er the hill
 The moon shone on the castle wa'.
 The mavis sang, while dew-drops hang
 Around her on the castle wa',

Sae merrily they danced the ring
 Frae eenin' till the cock did craw,
 And ay the o'erword o' the spring
 Was Irvine's barns are bonnie a'.

EPIGRAM ON ROUGH ROADS.

I'M now arrived—thanks to the gods!—
 Thro' pathways rough and muddy.
 A certain *sign* that makin' roads
 Is no this people's study:
 Altho' I'm not wi' Scripture cram'd,
 I'm sure the Bible says
 That heedless sinners shall be damn'd,
 Unless they mend their *ways*.

PRAYER—O THOU DREAD POWER.⁸⁸

O THOU dread Power, who reign'st above,
 I know thou wilt me hear,
 When for this scene of peace and love,
 I make my prayer sincere.

The hoary Sire—the mortal stroke,
 Long, long be pleas'd to spare,
 To bless his little filial flock,
 And show what good men are.

She, who her lovely offspring eyes
 With tender hopes and fears,
 O bless her with a mother's joys,
 But spare a mother's tears!

Their hope, their stay, their darling youth,
 In manhood's dawning blush,
 Bless him, Thou God of love and truth,
 Up to a parent's wish.

The beauteous, seraph sister-band—

With earnest tears I pray—

Thou know'st the snares on ev'ry hand,

Guide Thou their steps alway.

When, soon or late, they reach that coast,

O'er Life's rough ocean driven,

May they rejoice, no wand'rer lost,

A family in Heaven!

FAREWELL TO THE BANKS OF AYR.⁸⁹

Tune—"Roslin Castle."

THE gloomy night is gath'ring fast,

Loud roars the wild, inconstant blast,

Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,

I see it driving o'er the plain ;

The hunter now has left the moor,

The scatt'red coveys meet secure ,

While here I wander, prest with care,

Along the lonely banks of Ayr

The Autumn mourns her rip'ning corn

By early Winter's ravage torn ;

Across her placid, azure sky,

She sees the scowling tempest fly :

Chill runs my blood to hear it rave ;

I think upon the stormy wave,

Where many a danger I must dare,

Far from the bonie banks of Ayr.

'Tis not the surging billow's roar,

'Tis not that fatal, deadly shore ;

Tho' death in ev'ry shape appear,

The wretched have no more to fear :

But round my heart the ties are bound,

The heart transpierc'd with many a wound ;

These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,

To leave the bonie banks of Ayr.

Farewell, old Coila's hills and dales,
 Her heathy moors and winding vales;
 The scenes where wretched Fancy roves,
 Pursuing past, unhappy loves!
 Farewell, my friends! farewell, my foes!
 My peace with these, my love with those:
 The bursting tears my heart declare—
 Farewell, the bonie banks of Ayr!

ON MEETING WITH LORD DAER.⁹⁰

THIS wot ye all whom it concerns,
 I, Rhymer Robin, alias Burns,
 October twenty-third,
 A ne'er-to-be-forgotten day,
 Sae far I sprackl'd up the brae,
 I dinner'd wi' a Lord.

I've been at drucken writers' feasts,
 Nay, been bitch-fou 'mang godly priests—
 Wi' rev'rence be it spoken!—
 I've even join'd the honor'd jorum,
 When mighty Squireships of the quorum,
 Their hydra drouth did sloken.

But wi' a Lord!—stand out my shin,
 A Lord—a Peer—an Earl's son!
 Up higher yet, my bonnet!
 An' sic a Lord!—lang Scotch ells twa,
 Our Peerage he o'erlooks them a',
 As I look o'er my sonnet.

But O for Hogarth's magic pow'r!
 To show Sir Bardie's willyart glow'r,
 An' how he star'd an' stammer'd,
 When, goavin, as if led wi' branks,
 An' stumpin on his ploughman shanks,
 He in the parlour hammer'd.

I sidling shelter'd in a nook,
 An' at his Lordship steal't a look,
 Like some portentous omen;
 Except good sense and social glee,
 An' (what surpris'd me) modesty
 I markèd nought uncommon.
 I watch'd the symptoms o' the Great,
 The gentle pride, the lordly state,
 The arrogant assuming;
 The fient a pride, nae pride had he,
 Nor sauce, nor state, that I could see,
 Mair than an honest ploughman.
 Then from his Lordship I shall learn,
 Henceforth to meet with unconcern
 One rank as weel's another;
 Nae honest, worthy man need care
 To meet with noble, youthful Daer,
 For he but meets a brother.

MASONIC SONG.

Tune—"Shawn-boy," or, "Over the water to Charlie."

YE sons of old Killie, assembled by Willie,
 To follow the noble vocation;
 Your thrifty old mother has scarce such another
 To sit in that honoured station.
 I've little to say, but only to pray,
 As praying's the *ton* of your fashion;
 A prayer from the Muse you well may excuse,
 'Tis seldom her favourite passion.
 Ye powers who preside o'er the wind and the tide,
 Who markèd each element's border;
 Who formed this frame with beneficent aim,
 Whose sovereign statute is order.—
 Within this dear mansion, may wayward Contention
 Or witherèd Envy ne'er enter;
 May secrecy round be the mystical bound,
 And bro^herly Love be the centre!

TAM SAMSON'S ELEGY.⁹¹

"An honest man's the noblest work of God."—POPE.

HAS auld Kilmarnock seen the deil?
 Or great Mackinlay thrawn his heel?
 Or Robertson again grown weel,
 To preach an' read?
 "Na, waur than a'!" cries ilka chiel,
 "Tam Samson's dead!"

Kilmarnock lang may grunt an' graen,
 An' sigh, an' sab, an' greet her lane,
 An' cleed her bairns, man, wife, an' wean,
 In mourning weed;
 To Death she's dearly pay'd the kane—
 Tam Samson's dead!

The Brethren o' the mystic "level"
 May hing their head in woefu' bevel,
 While by their nose the tears will revel,
 Like ony bead;
 Death's gien the Lodge an unco devel—
 Tam Samson's dead!

When Winter muffles up his cloak,
 And binds the mire like a rock;
 When to the loughs the curlers flock,
 Wi' gleesome speed,
 Wha will they station at the "cock?"—
 Tam Samson's dead!

He was the king o' a' the core,
 To guard, or draw, or wick a bore,
 Or up the rink like Jehu roar,
 In time o' need;
 But now he lags on Death's "hog-score"—
 Tam Samson's dead!

Now safe the stately sawmont sail,
 And trouts bedropp'd wi' crimson hail,
 And eels, weel-ken'd for souple tail,
 And geds for greed,
 Since, dark in Death's "fish-creel, we wail"
 Tam Samson dead!

Rejoice, ye birring patricks a';
 Ye cootie muircocks, crouselly craw;
 Ye maukins, cock your fud fu' braw,
 Withouten dread;
 Your mortal fae is now awa—
 Tam Samson's dead!

That woefu' morn be ever mourn'd,
 Saw him in shootin graith adorn'd,
 While pointers round impatient burn'd,
 Frae couples free'd,
 But, och! he gaed and ne'er return'd!
 Tam Samson's dead!

In vain auld age his body batters,
 In vain the gout his ancles fetters,
 In vain the burns cam down like waters,
 An acre braid!
 Now ev'ry auld wife, greetin, clatters
 "Tam Samson's dead!"

Owre mony a weary hag he limpit,
 An' ay the tither shot he thumpit,
 Till coward Death behint him jumpit,
 Wi' deadly feide;
 Now he proclaims wi' tout o' trumpet,
 "Tam Samson's dead!"

When at his heart he felt the dagger,
 He reel'd his wonted bottle-swagger,
 But yet he drew the mortal trigger,
 Wi' weel-aimed heed;
 "L—d, five!" he cry'd, an' owre did stagger—
 Tam Samson's dead!

EPISTLE TO MAJOR LOGAN.⁹²

HAIL, thairm-inspirin, rattlin Willie!
 Tho' fortune's road be rough an' hilly
 To every fiddling, rhymin' billie,
 We never heed,
 But take it like the unback'd filly,
 Proud o' her speed.

When, idly goavin, whyles we saunter;
 Yirr! fancy barks, awa we canter,
 Up hill, down brae, till some mischanter,
 Some black bog-hole,
 Arrests us, then the scathe an' banter
 We're forced to thole.

Hale be your heart! hale be your fiddle!
 Lang may your elbuck jink and diddle,
 To cheer you through the weary widdle
 O' this wild warl',
 Until you on a crummock driddle,
 A grey-hair'd carl.

Come wealth, come poortith, late or soon,
 Heaven send your heart string's ay in tune,
 And screw your temper-pins aboon
 (A fifth or mair),
 The melancholious, lazy croon
 O' cankrie care.

May still your life from day to day
 Nae "lente largo" in the play,
 But "allegretto forte" gay,
 Harmomous flow,
 A sweeping, kindling, bauld strathspey—
 Encore! Bravo!

A blessing on the cheery gang
Wha dearly like a jig or sang,
An' never think o' right an' wrang
By square an' rule,
But as the clegs o' feeling stang,
Are wise or fool.

My hand-waled curse keep hard in chase
The harpy, hoodock, purse-proud race,
Wha count on poortith as disgrace;
Their tuneless hearts,
May fireside discords jar a base
To a' their parts!

But come, your hand, my careless brither,
I' th' ither warl', if there's anither,
An' that there is, I've little swither
About the matter;
We, cheek for chow, shall jog thegither,
I'se ne'er bid better.

We've faults and failings—granted clearly,
We're frail backsliding mortals merely,
Eve's bonie squad, priests wyte them sheerly
For our grand fa';
But still, but still, I like them dearly—
God bless them a'!

Ochon for poor Castalian drinkers,
When they fa' foul o' earthly jinkers!
The witching, curs'd, delicious blinkers
Hae put me hyte,
And gart me weet my waukrife winkers,
Wi' girm'n spite.

But by yon moon—and that's high swearin—
An' every star within my hearin!
An' by her een wha was a dear ane!
I'll ne'er forget;
I hope to gie the jads a clearin,
In fair play yet.

My loss I mourn, but not repent it ;
 I'll seek my pursie whare I tint it ;
 Ance to the Indies I were wonted,
 Some cantraip hour,
 By some sweet elf I'll yet be dinted ;
 Then *vive l'amour !*

Faites mes baise-mains respectueuse,
 To sentimental sister Susie,
 An, honest Lucky ; no to roose you,
 Ye may be proud,
 That sic a couple fate allows ye,
 To grace your blood.

Nae mair at present can I measure,
 An' trowth my rhymin ware's nae treasure ;
 But when in Ayr, some half-hour's leisure,
 Be't light, be't dark,
 Sir Bard will do himself the pleasure
 To call at Park.

MOSSGIEL, 30th October, 1786.

ROBERT BURNS.

ON SENSIBILITY.

RUSTICITY'S ungainly form
 May cloud the highest mind ;
 But when the heart is nobly warm,
 The *good* excuse will find.
 Propriety's cold, cautious rules
 Warm fervour may o'erlook ;
 But spare poor sensibility
 Th' ungentle, harsh rebuke.

A WINTER NIGHT.⁹³

"Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pityless storm !
How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these?"—SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN biting Boreas, fell and doure,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r ;
When Phœbus gies a short-liv'd glow'r,
Far south the lift,
Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r,
Or whirling drift :

Ae night the storm the steeples rocked,
Poor Labour sweet in sleep was locked,
While burns, wi' snawy wreaths up-choked,
Wild-eddying swirl ;
Or, thro' the mining outlet bocked,
Down headlong hurl :

List'ning the doors an' winnocks rattle,
I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' winter war,
And thro' the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle
Beneath a scaur.

Ilk happing bird,—wee, helpless thing !
That, in the merry months o' spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee ?
Whare wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
An' close thy e'e ?

Ev'n you, on murdering errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exil'd,
The blood-stain'd roost, and sheep-cote spoil'd,
My heart forgets,
While pityless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats !

Now Phœbe, in her midnight reign,
 Dark-muffl'd, view'd the dreary plain,
 Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
 Rose in my soul,
 When on my ear this plaintive strain,
 Slow, solemn, stole :—

“Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust!
 And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!
 Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows!
 Not all your rage, as now united, shows
 More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
 Vengeful malice, unrepenting,
 Than heaven-illumin'd Man on brother Man bestows!

“See stern Oppression's iron grip,
 Or mad Ambition's gory hand,
 Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
 Woe, Want, and Murder o'er the land!
 Ev'n in the peaceful rural vale,
 Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
 How pamper'd Luxury, Flatt'ry by her side,
 The parasite empoisoning her ear,
 With all the servile wretches in the rear,
 Looks o'er proud Property, extended wide;
 And eyes the simple, rustic hind,
 Whose toil upholds the glitt'ring show—
 A creature of another kind,
 Some coarser substance, unrefin'd—
 Plac'd for her lordly use, thus far, thus vile, below!

“Where, where is Love's fond, tender throe,
 With lordly Honor's lofty brow,
 The pow'rs you proudly own?
 Is there, beneath Love's noble name,
 Can harbour, dark, the selfish aim,
 To bless himself alone!

Mark maiden-innocence a prey
 To love-pretending snares :
 This boasted Honor turns away,
 Shunning soft Pity's rising sway,
 Regardless of the tears and unavailing pray'rs !
 Perhaps this hour, in Misery's squalid nest,
 She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
 And with a mother's fears shrinks at the rocking blast !

“ Oh ye ! who, sunk in beds of down,
 Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
 Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
 Whom friends and fortune quite disown !
 Ill-satisfy'd keen nature's clamorous call,
 Stretch'd on his straw, he lays himself to sleep ;
 While thro' the ragged roof and chinky wall,
 Chill, o'er his slumbers, piles the driftty heap !
 Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
 Where Guilt and poor Misfortune pine !
 Guilt, erring man, relenting view,
 But shall thy legal rage pursue
 The wretch, already crushèd low
 By cruel Fortune's undeservèd blow ?
 Affliction's sons are brothers in distress ;
 A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss ! ”

I heard nae mair, for Chanticleer
 Shook off the pouthery snaw,
 And hail'd the morning with a cheer,
 A cottage-rousing crow.

But deep this truth impress'd my mind—
 Thro' all His works abroad,
 The heart benevolent and kind
 The most resembles God.

YON WILD MOSSY MOUNTAINS.⁹⁴

YON wild mossy mountains sae lofty and wide,
That nurse in their bosom the youth o' the Clyde,
Where the grouse lead their coveys thro' the heather to feed,
And the shepherd tents his flock as he pipes on his reed.

Not Gowrie's rich valley, nor Forth's sunny shores,
To me hae the charms o' yon wild, mossy moors ;
For there, by a lanely, sequesterèd stream,
Resides a sweet lassie, my thought and my dream.

Amang thae wild mountains shall still be my path,
Ilk stream foaming down its ain green, narrow strath ;
For there, wi' my lassie, the day-lang I rove,
While o'er us unheeded flie the swift hours o' love.

She is not the fairest, altho' she is fair ;
O' nice education but sma' is her share ;
Her parentage humble as humble can be ,
But I lo'e the dear lassie because she lo'es me.

To Beauty what man but maun yield him a prize,
In her armour of glances, and blushes, and sighs ?
And when wit and refinement hae polish'd her darts,
They dazzle our een, as they flie to our hearts.

But kindness, sweet kindness, in the fond-sparkling e'e,
Has lustre outshining the diamond to me ;
And the heart beating love as I'm clasp'd in her arms,
O, these are my lassie's all-conquering charms !

ADDRESS TO EDINBURGH.⁹⁵

EDINA ! Scotia's darling seat !

All hail thy palaces and tow'rs,
Where once, beneath a Monarch's feet,

Sat Legislation's sovereign pow'rs :
From marking wildly-scatt'ed flow'rs,

As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
And singing, lone, the lingering hours,
I shelter in thy honor'd shade.

Here Wealth still swells the golden tide,
As busy Trade his labour plies ;
There Architecture's noble pride
Bids elegance and splendour rise :
Here Justice, from her native skies,
High wields her balance and her rod ;
There Learning, with his eagle eyes,
Seeks Science in her coy abode.

Thy sons, Edina, social, kind,
With open arms the stranger hail ,
Their views enlarg'd, their liberal mind,
Above the narrow, rural vale :
Attentive still to Sorrow's wail,
Or modest Merit's silent claim ;
And never may their sources fail !
And never Envy blot their name !

Thy daughters bright thy walks adorn,
Gay as the gilded summer sky,
Sweet as the dewy, milk-white thorn,
Dear as the raptur'd thrill of joy !
Fair Burnet strikes th' adoring eye,
Heaven's beauties on my fancy shine ;
I see the Sire of Love on high,
And own His work indeed divine !

There, watching high the least alarms,
Thy rough, rude fortress gleams afar ;
Like some bold veteran, grey in arms,
And marked with many a seamy scar :
The pond'rous wall and massy bar,
Grim-rising o'er the rugged rock,
Have oft withstood assailing war,
And oft repell'd th' invader's shock.

With awe-struck thought, and pitying tears,
I view that noble, stately Dome,
Where Scotia's kings of other years,
Fam'd heroes ! had their royal home :

Alas, how chang'd the times to come!
 Their royal name low in the dust!
 Their hapless race wild-wand'ring roam!
 Tho' rigid Law cries out, "'twas just!"

Wild beats my heart to trace your steps,
 Whose ancestors, in days of yore,
 Thro' hostile ranks and ruin'd gaps
 Old Scotia's bloody lion bore:
 Ev'n I who sing in rustic lore,
 Haply my sires have left their shed,
 And fac'd grim Danger's loudest roar,
 Bold-following where your fathers led!

Edina! Scotia's darling seat!
 All hail thy palaces and tow'rs;
 Where once, beneath a Monarch's feet,
 Sat Legislation's sovereign pow'rs:
 From marking wildly-scatt'red flow'rs,
 As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
 And singing, lone, the lingering hours,
 I shelter in thy honor'd shade.

ADDRESS TO A HAGGIS.⁹⁶

FAIR fa' your honest, sonsie face,
 Great chieftain o' the puddin'-race!
 Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
 Painch, tripe, or thairm:
 Weel are ye wordy o' a grace
 As lang's my arm.

The groaning trencher there ye fill,
 Your hurdies like a distant hill,
 Your pin wad help to mend a mill
 In time o' need,
 While thro' your pores the dews distil
 Like amber bead.

His knife see rustic Labour dight,
 An' cut you up wi' ready sleight,
 Trenching your gushing entrails bright,
 Like ony ditch ;
 And then, O what a glorious sight,
 Warm-reekin, rich !

Then, horn for horn, they stretch an' strive :
 Deil tak the hindmost ! on they drive,
 Till a' their weel-swallow'd kytes belyve
 Are bent like drums ;
 Then auld Guidman, maist like to rive,
 " Bethanket ! " hums.

Is there that owre his French *ragout*,
 Or *olio* that wad staw a sow,
 Or *fricasse* wad mak her spew
 Wi' perfect sconner,
 Looks down wi' sneering, scornfu' view
 On sic a dinner ?

Poor devil ! see him owre his trash,
 As feckless as a wither'd rash,
 His spindle shank, a guid whip-lash,
 His nieve a nit ;
 Thro' bloody flood or field to dash,
 O how unfit !

But mark the Rustic, haggis-fed,
 The trembling earth resounds his tread,
 Clap in his wale nieve a blade,
 He'll mak it whistle ;
 An' legs an' arms, an' heads will sned,
 Like taps o' thrissle.

Ye Pow'rs wha mak mankind your care,
 And dish them out their bill o' fare,
 Auld Scotland wants nae skinking ware
 That jaups in luggies ;
 But, if ye wish her gratefu' prayer,
 Gie her a Haggis !

TO MISS LOGAN,

WITH BEATTIE'S POEMS FOR A NEW-YEAR'S GIFT, JAN. 1, 1787.

AGAIN the silent wheels of time
Their annual round have driven,
And you, tho' scarce in maiden prime,
Are so much nearer Heaven.

No gifts have I from Indian coasts
The infant year to hail ;
I send you more than India boasts,
In Edwin's simple tale.

Our sex with guile, and faithless love,
Is charg'd, perhaps too true ;
But may, dear maid, each lover prove
An Edwin still to you.

WILLIAM SMELLIE—A SKETCH.

SHREWD Willie Smellie to Crochallan came ;
The old cock'd hat, the grey surtout, the same ;
His bristling beard just rising in its might,
'Twas four long nights and days to shaving night ;
His uncomb'd, grizzly locks, wild staring, thatch'd
A head for thought profound and clear, unmatch'd ;
Yet tho' his caustic wit was biting-rude,
His heart was warm, benevolent, and good.

RATTLIN, ROARIN WILLIE.⁹⁷

O RATTLIN, roarin Willie,
O, he held to the fair,
An' for to sell his fiddle,
An' buy some other ware ;
But parting wi' his fiddle,
The saut tear blin't his e'e,
An' rattlin, roarin Willie,
Ye're welcome hame to me.

O Willie, come sell'your fiddle,
 O sell your fiddle sae fine!
 O Willie, come sell your fiddle,
 An' buy a pint o' wine!
 If I should sell my fiddle,
 The warld would think I was mad;
 For monie a rantin day
 My fiddle an' I hae had.

As I cam by Crochallan,
 I cannihe keeket ben;
 Rattlin, roarin Willie,
 Was sittin at yon boord-en';
 Sittin at yon boord-en',
 And amang gude companie;
 Rattlin, roarin Wilhe,
 Ye're welcome hame to me!

BONIE DUNDEE.⁹⁸

O WHAR gat ye that haver-meal bannock?
 Silly blin' booby, O dinna ye see;
 I gat it frae a brisk young sodger laddie
 Atween Saint Johnstoun an' bonie Dundee.

O gin I saw the laddie that gae me't!
 Aft has he doudl't me upon his knee;
 May Heaven protect my bonie Scots laddie,
 An' send him safe hame to his babie an' me.

My blessin's upon thy sweet wee lippie!
 My blessin's upon thy bonie e'e-brie!
 Thy smiles are sae like my blythe sodger laddie,
 Thou's ay the dearer, and dearer to me!

But I'll big a bow'r on yon bonie banks,
 Whare Tay rins wimplin by sae clear;
 An' I'll cleed thee in the tartan sae fine,
 And mak thee a man like thy daddie dear.

EPIGRAMS.

EXTEMPORE IN THE COURT OF SESSION.

LORD ADVOCATE.

HE clench'd his pamphlets in his fist,
 He quoted and he hinted,
 Till, in a declamation-mist,
 His argument he tint it :
 He gapèd for't, he grapèd for't,
 He fand it was awa, man ;
 But what his common sense came short,
 He ekèd out wi' law, man.

MR. ERSKINE.

Collected, Harry stood awae,
 Then open'd out his arm, man ;
 His Lordship sat wi' ruefu' e'e,
 And ey'd the gathering storm, man :
 Like wind-driv'n hail it did assail,
 Or torrents owre a lin, man ;
 The BENCH sae wise lift up their eyes,
 Half-wauken'd wi' the din, man.

INSCRIPTION FOR THE HEADSTONE OF
FERGUSON THE POET.⁹⁹

NO sculptured marble here, nor pompous lay,
 "No storied urn nor animated bust ;"
 This simple stone directs pale Scotia's way,
 To pour her sorrows o'er the Poet's dust.

ADDITIONAL STANZAS.

She mourns, sweet tuneful youth, thy hapless fate ;
 Tho' all the powers of song thy fancy fired,
 Yet Luxury and Wealth lay by in state,
 And, thankless, starv'd what they so much admired.
 This tribute, with a tear, now gives
 A brother Bard—he can no more bestow ;
 But dear to fame thy Song immortal lives,
 A nobler monument than Art can show.

INSCRIBED UNDER FERGUSSON'S PORTRAIT.

CURSE on ungrateful man, that can be pleased,
And yet can starve the author of the pleasure.
O thou, my elder brother in misfortune,
By far my elder brother in the Muses,
With tears I pity thy unhappy fate!
Why is the Bard unpitied by the world,
Yet has so keen a relish of its pleasures?

EPISTLE TO MRS. SCOTT,¹⁰⁰

THE GUDEWIFE OF WAUCHOPE HOUSE, ROXBURGHSHIRE.

I MIND it weel in early date,
When I was beardless, young, and blate,
An' first could thresh the barn,
Or haud a yokin at the pleugh;
An' tho' forfoughten sair eneugh,
Yet unco proud to learn:
When first amang the yellow corn
A man I reckon'd was,
An' wi' the lave ilk merry morn
Could rank my rig and lass,
Still shearing, and clearing
The tither stookèd raw,
Wi' claivers and haivers,
Wearing the day awa.
E'en then, a wish (I mind its pow'r),
A wish that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heave my breast,
That I for poor auld Scotland's sake
Some usefu' plan or book could make,
Or sing a sang at least.
The rough burr-thistle, spreading wide
Amang the bearded bear,
I turn'd the weeder-clips aside,
An' spar'd the symbol dear:

No nation, no station,
My envy e'er could raise ;
A Scot still, but blot still,
I knew nae higher praise.

But still the elements o' sang,
In formless jumble, right an' wrang,
Wild floated in my brain ,
'Till on that har'st I said before,
My partner in the merry core,
She rous'd the forming strain ;
I see her yet, the sonsie quean
That lighted up my jungle,
Her witching smile, her pauky een
That gart my heart-strings tingle ;
I firèd, inspired,
At every kindling keek,
But bashing, and dashing,
I fearèd ay to speak.

Health to the sex! ilk guid chiel says :
Wi' merry dance in winter days,
An' we to share in common ;
The gust o' joy, the balm of woe,
The saul o' life, the heaven below,
Is rapture-giving woman.
Ye surly sumphs, who hate the name,
Be mindfu' o' your mither ;
She, honest woman, may think shame
That ye're connected with her :
Ye're wae men, ye're nae men
That slight the lovely dears ;
To shame ye, disclaim ye,
Ilk honest burkie swears.

For you, no bred to barn and byre,
Wha sweetly tune the Scottish lyre,
Thanks to you for your line :

The marled plaid ye kindly spare,
 By me should gratefully be ware;
 'Twad please me to the nine.
 I'd be mair vauntie o' my hap,
 Douce hingin owre my curple,
 Than ony ermine ever lap,
 Or proud imperial purple.
 Farewell then, lang hale then,
 An' plenty be your fa';
 May losses and crosses
 Ne'er at your hallan ca'!

March, 1787.

R. BURNS.

TO MISS ISABELLA MACLEOD.¹⁰¹

EDINBURGH, *March 16, 1787.*

THE crimson blossom charms the bee,
 The summer sun the swallow;
 So dear this tuneful gift to me
 From lovely Isabella.

Her portrait fair upon my mind
 Revolving time shall mellow,
 And mem'ry's latest effort find
 The lovely Isabella.

No Bard nor lover's rapture this
 In fancies vain and shallow!
 She is, so come my soul to bliss,
 The lovely Isabella.

VERSES INTENDED TO BE WRITTEN BELOW A
 NOBLE EARL'S PICTURE.

WHOSE is that noble, dauntless brow?
 And whose that eye of fire?
 And whose that generous princely mien,
 E'en rooted foes admire?



"Twa dogs, that were na thrang at hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time."

Stranger! to justly show that brow,
 And mark that eye of fire,
 Would take *His* hand, whose vernal tints
 His other works inspire.

Bright as a cloudless summer sun,
 With stately port he moves ;
 His guardian Seraph eyes with awe
 The noble Ward he loves.

Among the illustrious Scottish sons,
 That Chief thou may'st discern ;
 Mark Scotia's fond-returning eye,
 It dwells upon Glencairn.

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY MR. WOODS ON HIS BENEFIT NIGHT, MONDAY,
 16TH APRIL, 1787.

WHEN, by a generous Public's kind acclaim,
 That dearest meed is granted—honest fame ;
 When *here* your favour is the actor's lot,
 Nor even the *man in private life* forgot ;
 What breast so dead to heavenly Virtue's glow,
 But heaves impassion'd with the grateful throe ?

Poor is the task to please a barb'rous throng,
 It needs no Siddons' powers in Southern's song ;
 But here an ancient nation fam'd afar
 For genius, learning high, as great in war.
 Hail, CALEDONIA ! name for ever dear !
 Before whose sons I'm honour'd to appear ?
 Where every science, every noble art,
 That can inform the mind, or mend the heart,
 Is known ; as grateful nations oft have found,
 Far as the rude barbarian marks the bound,
 Philosophy, no idle pedant dream,
 Here holds her search by heaven-taught Reason's beam ;

Here History paints with elegance and force
 The tide of Empire's fluctuating course ;
 Here Douglas forms wild Shakespeare into plan,
 And Harley rouses all the God in man.
 When well-form'd taste and sparkling wit unite
 With manly lore, or female beauty bright
 (Beauty, where faultless symmetry and grace
 Can only charm us in the second place),
 Witness, my heart, how oft with panting fear,
 As on this night, I've met these judges here !
 But still the hope Experience taught to live,
 Equal to judge—you're candid to forgive.
 No hundred-headed Riot here we meet,
 With decency and law beneath his feet ;
 Nor Insolence assumes fair Freedom's name :
 Like CALEDONIANS, you applaud or blame.

O Thou, dread Power! whose empire-giving hand
 Has oft been stretch'd to shield the honour'd land!
 Strong may she glow with all her ancient fire ;
 May every son be worthy of his sire ;
 Firm may she rise, with generous disdain
 At Tyranny's, or direr Pleasure's chain ;
 Still Self-dependent in her native shore,
 Bold may she brave grim Danger's loudest roar,
 Till Fate the curtain drops on worlds to be no more.

THE BONIE MOOR-HEN.¹⁰²

THE heather was blooming, the meadows were mawn,
 Our lads gaed a-hunting ae day at the dawn,
 O'er moors and o'er mosses and mony a glen,
 At length they discovered a bonie moor-hen.

Chorus—I rede you, beware at the hunting, young men,
 I rede you, beware at the hunting, young men ;
 Take some on the wing, and some as they spring,
 But cannily steal on a bonie moor-hen.

Sweet-brushing the dew from the brown heather bells,
 Her colours betray'd her on yon mossy fells ;
 Her plumage outlustr'd the pride o' the spring,
 And O! as she wanton'd sae gay on the wing.

I rede you, etc.

Auld Phœbus himsel, as he peep'd o'er the hill,
 In spite at her plumage he tryèd his skill ;
 He levell'd his rays where she bask'd on the brae—
 His rays were outshone, and but mark'd where she lay.

I rede you, etc.

They hunted the valley, they hunted the hill,
 The best of our lads wi' the best o' their skill ;
 But still as the fairest she sat in their sight,
 Then whirr! she was over, a mile at a flight.

I rede you, etc.

MY LORD A-HUNTING ¹⁰³

Chorus—My lady's gown, there's gairs upon't,
 And gowden flowers sae rare upon't ;
 But Jenny's jimps and jirkinet,
 My lord thinks meikle mair upon't.

My lord a-hunting he is gane,
 But hounds or hawks wi' him are nane ;
 By Colin's cottage lies his game,
 If Colin's Jenny be at hame.

My lady's gown, etc.

My lady's white, my lady's red,
 And kith and kin o' Cassillis' blude ;
 But her ten-pund lands o' tocher gude
 Were a' the charms his lordship lo'ed.

My lady's gown, etc.

Out o'er yon muir, out o'er yon moss,
 Where gor-cocks thro' the heather pass,
 There wons auld Colin's bonie lass,
 A lily in a wilderness.

My lady's gown, etc.

Sae sweetly move her genty limbs,
 Like music notes o' lovers' hymns :
 The diamond-dew in her een sae blue,
 Where laughing love sae wanton swims.
 My lady's gown, etc.

My lady's dink, my lady's drest,
 The flower and fancy o' the west ;
 But the lassie that a man lo'es best,
 O that's the lass to mak him blest.
 My lady's gown, etc.

EPIGRAM AT ROSLIN INN.

My blessings on ye, honest wife!
 I ne'er was here before ;
 Ye've wealth o' gear for spoon and knife—
 Heart could not wish for more.
 Heav'n keep you clear o' sturt and strife,
 Till far ayont fourscore,
 And while I toddle on thro' life,
 I'll ne'er gae by your door!

EPIGRAM ADDRESSED TO AN ARTIST

WHOM THE POET FOUND ENGAGED ON A REPRESENTATION OF
 JACOB'S DREAM.

DEAR ———, I'll gie ye some advice,
 You'll tak it no uncivil :
 You shouldna paint at angels mair,
 But try and paint the devil.

To paint an Angel's kittle wark,
 Wi' Nick, there's little danger :
 You'll easy draw a lang-kent face,
 But no sae weel a *Stranger*.—R. B.

THE BOOK-WORMS.

THROUGH and through th' inspir'd leaves,
 Ye maggots, make your windings ;
 But O respect his lordship's taste,
 And spare the golden bindings.

ON ELPHINSTONE'S TRANSLATION OF MARTIAL'S
EPIGRAMS.

O THOU whom Poesy abhors,
 Whom Prose has turnèd out of doors,
 Heard'st thou yon groan ?—proceed no further,
 'Twas laurel'd Martial calling "murther."

A BOTTLE AND FRIEND.¹⁰⁴

"There's nane that's blest of human kind,
 But the cheerful and the gay, man."

HERE's a bottle and an honest friend!
 What wad ye wish for mair, man ?
 Wha kens, before his life may end,
 What his share may be o' care, man ?

Then catch the moments as they fly,
 And use them as ye ought, man :
 Believe me, happiness is shy,
 And comes not ay when sought, man.

LINES WRITTEN UNDER THE PICTURE OF THE
CELEBRATED MISS BURNS.

CEASE, ye prudes, your envious railing,
 Lovely Burns has charms—confess :
 True it is, she had one failing,
 Had a woman ever less ?

EPITAPH FOR WILLIAM NICOL, OF THE HIGH
SCHOOL, EDINBURGH.

YE maggots, feed on Nicol's brain,
For few sic feasts you've gotten ;
And fix your claws in Nicol's heart,
For deal a bit o't's rotten.

EPITAPH FOR WILLIAM MICHIE,
SCHOOLMASTER OF CLEISH PARISH, FIFESHIRE.

HERE lie Willie Michie's banes,
O Satan, when ye tak him,
Gie him the schulin o' your weans,
For clever deils he'll mak them!

HEY, CA' THRO'.¹⁰⁵

UP wi' the carls o' Dysart,
And the lads o' Buckhaven,
And the kimmers o' Largo,
And the lasses o' Leven.

Chorus—Hey, ca' thro', ca' thro',
For we hae mickle ado ;
Hey, ca' thro', ca' thro',
For we hae mickle ado.

We hae tales to tell,
An' we hae sangs to sing ;
We hae pennies to spend,
An' we hae pints to bring,
Hey, ca' thro', etc.

We'll live a' our days,
And them that comes behin',
Let them do the like,
An' spend the gear they win.
Hey, ca' thro', etc.

ADDRESS TO WM TYTLER, ESQ, OF
WOODHOUSELEE,¹⁰⁶

WITH AN IMPRESSION OF THE AUTHOR'S PORTRAIT.

REVERED defender of beauteous Stuart,
Of Stuart, a name once respected ;
A name, which to love was the mark of a true heart,
But now 'tis despis'd and neglected.

Tho' something like moisture conglobes in my eye,
Let no one misdeem me disloyal ;
A poor friendless wand'rer may well claim a sigh,
Still more, if that wand'rer were royal.

My fathers that name have rever'd on a throne :
My fathers have died to right it ,
Those fathers would spurn their degenerate son,
That name should he scoffingly slight it.

Still in prayers for King George I most heartily join,
The Queen, and the rest of the gentry :
Be they wise, be they foolish, is nothing of mine ;
Their title's avow'd by my country.

But why of that epocha make such a fuss,
That gave us th' Electoral stem ?
If bringing them over was lucky for us,
I'm sure 'twas as lucky for them.

But loyalty truce ! we're on dangerous ground ;
Who knows how the fashions may alter ?
The doctrine, to-day, that is loyalty sound,
To-morrow may bring us a halter !

I send you a trifle, a head of a bard,
A trifle scarce worthy your care ;
But accept it, good Sir, as a mark of regard,
Sincere as a saint's dying prayer.

Now life's chilly evening dim shades on your eye,
And ushers the long dreary night :
But you, like the star that athwart gilds the sky,
Your course to the latest is bright.

EPIGRAM TO MISS AINSLIE IN CHURCH.¹⁰⁷

FAIR maid, you need not take the hint,
 Nor idle texts pursue:
 'Twas guilty sinners that he meant,
 Not *Angels* such as you.

BURLESQUE LAMENT FOR THE ABSENCE OF
WILLIAM CREECH, PUBLISHER.

AULD chuckie Reekie's sair distrest,
 Down droops her ance weel burnish'd crest,
 Nae joy her bonie buskit nest
 Can yield ava,
 Her darling bird that she lo'es best—
 Willie's awa.

O Willie was a witty wight,
 And had o' things an unco' sleight,
 Auld Reekie ay he keepit tight,
 And trig an' braw:
 But now they'll busk her like a fright,—
 Willie's awa!

The stiffest o' them a' he bow'd,
 The bauldest o' them a' he cow'd;
 They durst nae mair than he allow'd,
 That was a law:
 We've lost a birkie weel worth gowd;
 Willie's awa!

Now gawkies, tawpies, gowks and fools,
 Frae colleges and boarding schools,
 May sprout like simmer puddock-stools
 In glen or shaw;
 He wha could brush them down to mools—
 Willie, 's awa!

The brethren o' the commerce-chaumer
 May mourn their loss wi' doolfu' clamour ;
 He was a dictionar and grammar
 Among them a' ;
 I fear they'll now mak mony a stammer ;
 Willie's awa!

Nae mair we see his levee door
 Philosophers and Poets pour,
 And toothy critics by the score,
 In bloody raw!
 The adjutant o' a' the core—
 Willie, 's awa!

Now worthy Gregory's Latin face,
 Tytler's and Greenfield's modest grace ;
 M'Kenzie, Stewart, such a brace
 As Rome ne'er saw ;
 They a' maun meet some ither place,
 Willie's awa!

Poor Burns ev'n "Scotch Drink" canna quicken,
 He cheeps like some bewilder'd chicken
 Scar'd frae it's minnie and the cleckin,
 By hoodie-craw ;
 Grief's gien his heart an unco kickin,
 Willie's awa.

Now ev'ry sour-mou'd girnin blellum,
 And Calvin's folk, are fit to fell him ;
 Ilk self-conceited critic skellum
 His quill may draw ;
 He wha could brawlie ward their bellum—
 Willie, 's awa!

Up wimpling stately Tweed I've sped,
 And Eden scenes on crystal Jed,
 And Ettrick banks, now roaring red,
 While tempests blaw ;
 But every joy and pleasure's fled,
 Willie's awa!

May I be Slander's common speech;
 A text for Infamy to preach;
 And lastly, streekit out to bleach
 In winter snaw,
 When I forget thee, WILLIE CREECH,
 Tho' far awa!
 May never wicked Fortune touzle him!
 May never wicked men bamboozle him!
 Until a pow as auld's Methusalem
 He canty claw!
 Then to the blessed new Jerusalem,
 Fleet wing awa!

NOTE TO MR. RENTON OF LAMERTON.

YOUR billet, Sir, I grant receipt;
 Wi' you I'll canter ony gate,
 Tho' 'twere a trip to yon blue warl',
 Whare birkies march on burning marl:
 Then, Sir, God willing, I'll attend ye,
 And to His goodness I commend ye.
 R. BURNS.

THE BARD AT INVERARAY.¹⁰⁸

WHOE'ER he be that sojourns here,
 I pity much his case,
 Unless he come to wait upon
 The lord *their* god, "His Grace."
 There's naething here but Highland pride,
 And Highland scab and hunger:
 If Providence has sent me here,
 'Twas surely in an anger.

EPIGRAM TO MISS JEAN SCOTT.

O HAD each Scot of ancient times
 Been Jeanie Scott, as thou art;
 The bravest heart on English ground
 Had yielded like a coward.

ON THE DEATH OF JOHN M'LEOD, ESQ.,
BROTHER TO A YOUNG LADY, A PARTICULAR FRIEND OF
THE AUTHOR.

SAD thy tale, thou idle page,
And rueful thy alarms ;
Death tears the brother of her love
From Isabella's arms.

Sweetly deckt with pearly dew
The morning rose may blow ;
But cold successive noontide blasts
May lay its beauties low.

Fair on Isabella's morn
The sun propitious smil'd ;
But, long ere noon, succeeding clouds
Succeeding hopes beguil'd.

Fate oft tears the bosom chords
That Nature finest strung ;
So Isabella's heart was form'd,
And so that heart was wrung.

Dread Omnipotence alone
Can heal the wound He gave—
Can point the brimful care-worn eyes
To scenes beyond the grave.

Virtue's blossoms there shall blow,
And fear no withering blast ,
There Isabella's spotless worth
Shall happy be at last.

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF SIR JAMES
HUNTER BLAIR.¹⁰⁹

THE lamp of day with ill-presaging glare,
Dim, cloudy, sank beneath the western wave ;
Th' inconstant blast howl'd thro' the darkening air,
And hollow whistled in the rocky cave.

Lone as I wander'd by each cliff and dell,
Once the lov'd haunts of Scotia's royal train ;
Or mus'd where limpid streams, once hallow'd, well,
Or mould'ring ruins mark the sacred fane.

Th' increasing blast roared round the beetling rocks,
The clouds, swift-wing'd, flew o'er the starry sky,
The groaning trees untimely shed their locks,
And shooting meteors caught the startled eye.

The paly moon rose in the livid east,
And 'mong the cliffs disclos'd a stately form
In weeds of woe, that frantic beat her breast,
And mix'd her wailings with the raving storm.

Wild to my heart the filial pulses glow,
'Twas Caledonia's trophied shield I view'd :
Her form majestic droop'd in pensive woe,
The lightning of her eye in tears imbued.

Revers'd that spear, redoubtable in war,
Reclined that banner, erst in fields unfurl'd,
That like a deathful meteor gleam'd afar,
And brav'd the mighty monarchs of the world.

"My patriot son fills an untimely grave!"
With accents wild and lifted arms she cried :
"Low lies the hand that oft was stretch'd to save,
Low lies the heart that swell'd with honest pride.

"A weeping country joins a widow's tear ;
The helpless poor mix with the orphan's cry ;
The drooping Arts surround their patron's bier ;
And graceful Science heaves the heart-felt sigh !

"I saw my sons resume their ancient fire ;
I saw fair Freedom's blossoms richly blow :
But ah ! how hope is born but to expire !
Relentless Fate has laid their guardian low.

“My patriot falls, but shall he lie unsung,
While empty greatness saves a worthless name?
No; every Muse shall join her tuneful tongue,
And future ages hear his growing fame.

“And I will join a mother’s tender cares,
Thro’ future times to make his virtues last;
That distant years may boast of other Blairs!”—
She said, and vanish’d with the sweeping blast.

TO MISS FERRIER,
ENCLOSING THE ELEGY ON SIR J. H. BLAIR.

NAE heathen name shall I prefix,
Frae Pindus or Parnassus;
Auld Reekie dings them a’ to sticks,
For rhyme-inspiring lasses.

Jove’s tunefu’ dochters three times three
Made Homer deep their debtor;
But, gien the body half an e’e,
Nine Ferniers wad done better!

Last day my mind was in a bog,
Down George’s Street I stotied;
A creeping, cauld, prosaic fog
My very senses doited.

Do what I dought to set her free,
My saul lay in the mire;
Ye turned a neuk—I saw your e’e—
She took the wing like fire.

The mournfu’ sang I here enclose,
In gratitude I send you,
And pray, in rhyme as weel as prose,
A’ guid things may attend you!

IMPROMPTU ON CARRON IRON WORKS.¹¹⁰

We cam na here to view your warks,
 In hopes to be mair wise,
 But only, lest we gang to hell,
 It may be nae surprise :
 But when we tirl'd at your door
 Your porter dought na hear us ;
 Sae may, shou'd we to Hell's yetts come,
 Your billy Satan sair us !

 WRITTEN BY SOMEBODY ON THE WINDOW ¹¹¹
 OF AN INN AT STIRLING, ON SEEING THE ROYAL PALACE IN RUIN.

HERE Stuarts once in glory reigned,
 And laws for Scotland's weal ordained ;
 But now unroof'd their palace stands,
 Their sceptre's sway'd by other hands ;
 Fallen indeed, and to the earth
 Whence grovelling reptiles take their birth.
 The injured Stuart line is gone,
 A race outlandish fills their throne ;
 An idiot race, to honour lost ;
 Who know them best despise them most.

 VERSES WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL,
 OVER THE CHIMNEY-PIECE, IN THE PARLOUR OF THE INN AT
 KENMORE, TAYMOUTH.

ADMIRING Nature in her wildest grace,
 These northern scenes with weary feet I trace ;
 O'er many a winding dale and painful steep,
 Th' abodes of covey'd grouse and timid sheep,
 My savage journey, curious, I pursue,
 Till fam'd Breadalbane opens to my view.—
 The meeting cliffs each deep-sunk glen divides,
 The woods, wild-scatter'd, clothe their ample sides ;.

Th' outstretching lake, imbosomed 'mong the hills,
 The eye with wonder and amazement fills,
 The Tay meand'ring sweet in infant pride,
 The palace rising on his verdant side,
 The lawns wood-fring'd in Nature's native taste,
 The hillocks dropt in Nature's careless haste,
 The arches striding o'er the new-born stream,
 The village glittering in the noontide beam—

.

Poetic ardors in my bosom swell,
 Lone wand'ring by the hermit's mossy cell;
 The sweeping theatre of hanging woods,
 Th' incessant roar of headlong tumbling floods—

.

Here Poesy might wake her heav'n-taught lyre,
 And look through Nature with creative fire;
 Here, to the wrongs of Fate half reconcil'd,
 Misfortune's lighten'd steps might wander wild;
 And Disappointment, in these lonely bounds,
 Find balm to soothe her bitter rankling wounds:
 Here heart-struck Grief might heav'nward stretch her scan,
 And injur'd Worth forget and pardon man.

.

THE BIRKS OF ABERFELDY.¹¹²

Chorus.—Bonie lassie, will ye go,
 Will ye go, will ye go,
 Bonie lassie, will ye go
 To the birks of Aberfeldy!

Now Simmer blinks on flowery braes,
 And o'er the crystal streamlet plays;
 Come let us spend the lightsome days,
 In the birks of Aberfeldy.
 Bonie lassie, etc.

The little birdies blythely sing,
 While o'er their heads the hazels hing,
 Or lightly flit on wanton wing,
 In the birks of Aberfeldy.
 Bonie lassie, etc.

The braes ascend like lofty wa's,
 The foamy stream deep-roaring fa's,
 O'erhung wi' fragrant spreading shaws—
 The birks of Aberfeldy.
 Bonie lassie, etc.

The hoary cliffs are crown'd wi' flowers,
 White o'er the linns the burnie pours,
 And rising, weets wi' misty showers
 The birks of Aberfeldy.
 Bonie lassie, etc.

Let Fortune's gifts at random flee,
 They ne'er shall draw a wish frae me ;
 Supremely blest wi' love and thee,
 In the birks of Aberfeldy.
 Bonie lassie, etc.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF BRUAR WATER.¹¹³

TO THE NOBLE DUKE OF ATHOLE.

My lord, I know your noble ear
 Woe ne'er assails in vain ;
 Embolden'd thus, I beg you'll hear
 Your humble slave complain,
 How saucy Phoebus' scorching beams,
 In flaming summer-pride,
 Dry-withering, waste my foamy streams,
 And drink my crystal tide.

The lightly-jumpin, glowrin trouts,
 That thro' my waters play,
 If, in their random, wanton spouts,
 They near the margin stray ;



Photo by G. W. Wilson & Co., Ltd.

BU

"White o'er the linns the burnie pours,
And rising, weets wi' misty showers
The birks of Aberfeldy."

If, hapless chance! they linger lang,
I'm scorching up so shallow,
They're left the whitening stanes amang,
In gasping death to wallow.

Last day I grat wi' spite and teen,
As poet Burns came by,
That, to a bard, I should be seen
Wi' half my channel dry ;
A panegyric rhyme, I ween,
Ev'n as I was, he shor'd me ;
But had I in my glory been,
He, kneeling, wad ador'd me.

Here, foaming down the skelvy rocks
In twisting strength I rin ;
There, high my boiling torrent smokes
Wild-roaring o'er a linn :
Enjoying large each spring and well,
As Nature gave them me,
I am, altho' I say't mysel,
Worth gaun a mile to see.

Would then my noble master please
To grant my highest wishes,
He'll shade the banks wi' tow'ring trees,
And bonie spreading bushes.
Delighted doubly then, my lord,
You'll wander on my banks,
And listen mony a grateful bird
Return you tuneful thanks.

The sober lav'rock, warbling wild,
Shall to the skies aspire ;
The gowdspink, Music's gayest child,
Shall sweetly join the choir ;
The blackbird strong, the lintwhite clear,
The mavis mild and mellow ;
The robin pensive Autumn cheer,
In all her locks of yellow.

This, too, a covert shall ensure,
To shield them from the storm ;
And coward maukin sleep secure,
Low in her grassy form :
Here shall the shepherd make his seat,
To weave his crown of flow'rs ;
Or find a shelt'ring, safe retreat,
From prone-descending show'rs.

And here, by sweet, endearing stealth,
Shall meet the loving pair,
Despising worlds, with all their wealth,
As empty, idle care ;
The flow'rs shall vie in all their charms,
The hour of heav'n to grace ;
And birks extend their fragrant arms
To screen the dear embrace.

Here haply, too, at vernal dawn,
Some musing bard may stray,
And eye the smoking, dewy lawn,
And misty mountain grey ;
Or, by the reaper's nightly beam,
Mild-chequering thro' the trees,
Rave to my darkly dashing stream,
Hoarse-swelling on the breeze.

Let lofty firs, and ashes cool,
My lowly banks o'erspread,
And view, deep-bending in the pool,
Their shadows' wat'ry-bed :
Let fragrant birks, in woodbines drest,
My craggy cliffs adorn ;
And, for the little songster's nest,
The close embow'ring thorn.

So may, old Scotia's darling hope,
Your little angel band
Spring, like their fathers, up to prop
Their honour'd native land !

So may, thro' Albion's farthest ken,
 To social-flowing glasses,
 The grace be—"Athole's honest men,
 And Athole's bonie lasses!"

LINES ON THE FALLS OF FYERS,

NEAR LOCH-NESS.

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL ON THE SPOT.

AMONG the heathy hills and ragged woods
 The roaring Fyers pours his mossy floods;
 Till full he dashes on the rocky mounds,
 Where, thro' a shapeless-breach, his stream resounds,
 As high in air the bursting torrents flow,
 As deep recoiling surges foam below,
 Prone down the rock the whitening sheet descends,
 And viewless Echo's ear, astonished, rends.
 Dim-seen, through rising mists and ceaseless show'rs,
 The hoary cavern, wide surrounding lours:
 Still thro' the gap the struggling river toils,
 And still, below, the horrid caldron boils—

.

A HIGHLAND WELCOME.

WRITTEN ON PARTING WITH A KIND HOST IN THE HIGHLANDS.

WHEN Death's dark stream I ferry o'er,
 (A time that surely shall come),
 In Heav'n itself I'll ask no more,
 Than just a Highland welcome.

STRATHALLAN'S LAMENT.¹¹⁴

THICKEST night, surround my dwelling!
 Howling tempests, o'er me rave!
 Turbid torrents, wintry swelling,
 Roaring by my lonely cave!

Crystal streamlets gently flowing,
 Busy haunts of base mankind,
 Western breezes softly blowing,
 Suit not my distracted mind.
 In the cause of Right engagèd,
 Wrongs injurious to redress,
 Honor's war we strongly wagèd,
 But the heavens deny'd success,
 Ruin's wheel has driven o'er us,
 Not a hope that dare attend,
 The wide world is all before us—
 But a world without a friend.

CASTLE GORDON.¹¹⁵

STREAMS that glide in orient plains,
 Never bound by Winter's chains;
 Glowing here on golden sands,
 There immixed with foulest stains
 From Tyranny's empurpled hands:
 These, their richly gleaming waves,
 I leave to tyrants and their slaves;
 Give me the stream that sweetly laves
 The banks by Castle Gordon.
 Spicy forests, ever gay,
 Shading from the burning ray
 Hapless wretches sold to toil;
 Or the ruthless native's way,
 Bent on slaughter, blood, and spoil:
 Woods that ever verdant wave,
 I leave the tyrant and the slave;
 Give me the groves that lofty brave
 The storms, by Castle Gordon.
 Wildly here without control,
 Nature reigns and rules the whole;
 In that sober pensive mood,
 Dearest to the feeling soul,
 She plants the forest, pours the flood:

Life's poor day I'll musing rave,
 And find at night a sheltering cave,
 Where waters flow and wild woods wave,
 By bonie Castle Gordon.

LADY ONLIE, HONEST LUCKY.¹¹⁶

Tune—"The Ruffian's Rant."

A' THE lads o' Thorniebank,
 When they gae to the shore o' Bucky,
 They'll step in an' tak a pint,
 Wi' Lady Onlie, honest lucky.

Chorus.—Lady Onlie, honest lucky,
 Brews gude ale at shore o' Bucky;
 I wish her sale for her gude ale,
 The best on a' the shore o' Bucky.
 Her house sae bien, her curch sae clean,
 I wat she is a dainty chuckie;
 And cheery blinks the ingle-gleede
 O' Lady Onlie, honest lucky.
 Lady Onlie, etc.

THENIEL MENZIES' BONIE MARY.¹¹⁷

Air—"The Ruffian's Rant," or "Roy's Wife."

IN comin by the brig o' Dye,
 At Darlet we a blink did tarry;
 As day was dawin in the sky,
 We drank a health to bonie Mary.

Chorus.—Theniel Menzies' bonie Mary,
 Theniel Menzies' bonie Mary,
 Charlie Grigor tint his plaidie,
 Kissin' Theniel's bonie Mary.

Her een sae bright, her brow sae white,
 Her haffet locks as brown's a berry;
 And ay they dimpl't wi' a smile,
 The rosy cheeks o' bonie Mary
 Theniel Menzies' bonie Mary, etc.

We lap an' danc'd the lee-lang day,
Till piper lads were wae and weary ;
But Charlie gat the spring to pay,
For kissin Theniel's bonie Mary.
Theniel Menzies' bonie Mary, etc.

THE BONIE LASS OF ALBANY.¹¹⁸

Tune—"Mary's Dream."

MY heart is wae, and unco wae,
To think upon the raging sea
That roars between her gardens green
An' the bonie Lass of Albany.

This lovely maid's of royal blood
That rulèd Albion's kingdoms three,
But oh, alas! for her bonie face,
They've wrang'd the Lass of Albany.

In the rolling tide of spreading Clyde
There sits an isle of high degree,
And a town of fame whose princely name
Should grace the Lass of Albany.

But there's a youth, a witless youth,
That fills the place where she should be ;
We'll send him o'er to his native shore,
And bring our ain sweet Albany.

Alas the day, and woe the day,
A false usurper wan the gree,
Who now commands the towers and lands—
The royal right of Albany.

We'll daily pray, we'll nightly pray,
On bended knees most fervently,
The time may come, with pipe an' drum
We'll welcome hame fair Albany.

ON SCARING SOME WATER-FOWL IN LOCH-TURIT.¹¹⁹

WHY, ye tenants of the lake,
For me your wat'ry haunt forsake ?
Tell me, fellow-creatures, why
At my presence thus you fly ?
Why disturb your social joys,
Parent, filial, kindred ties ?—
Common friend to you and me,
Nature's gifts to all are free :
Peaceful keep your dimpling wave,
Busy feed, or wanton lave ;
Or, beneath the sheltering rock,
Bide the surging billow's shock.

Conscious, blushing for our race,
Soon, too soon, your fears I trace.
Man, your proud usurping foe,
Would be lord of all below :
Plumes himself in freedom's pride,
Tyrant stern to all beside.

The eagle, from the cliffy brow,
Marking you his prey below,
In his breast no pity dwells,
Strong necessity compels :
But Man, to whom alone is giv'n
A ray direct from pitying Heav'n,
Glories in his heart humane—
And creatures for his pleasure slain !

In these savage, liquid plains,
Only known to wand'ring swains,
Where the mossy riv'let strays,
Far from human haunts and ways ;
All on Nature you depend,
And life's poor season peaceful spend.

Or, if man's superior might
 Dare invade your native right,
 On the lofty ether borne,
 Man with all his pow'rs you scorn;
 Swiftly seek, on clanging wings,
 Other lakes and other springs,
 And the foe you cannot brave,
 Scorn at least to be his slave.

BLYTHE WAS SHE.¹²⁰

Tune—"Andro and his Cutty Gun."

Chorus.—Blythe, blythe and merry was she,
 Blythe was she but and ben;
 Blythe by the banks of Earn,
 And blythe in Glenturit glen.

By Oughtertyre grows the aik,
 On Yarrow banks the birken shaw;
 But Phemie was a bonier lass
 Than braes o' Yarrow ever saw.
 Blythe, blythe, etc.

Her looks were like a flow'r in May,
 Her smile was like a simmer morn:
 She trippèd by the banks o' Earn,
 As light's a bird upon a thorn.
 Blythe, blythe, etc.

Her bonie face it was as meek
 As ony lamb upon a lea;
 The evening sun was ne'er sae sweet,
 As was the blink o' Phemie's e'e.
 Blythe, blythe, etc.

The Highland hills I've wander'd wide,
 And o'er the Lawlands, I hae been;
 But Phemie was the blythest lass
 That ever trode the dewy green.
 Blythe, blythe, etc.

A ROSE-BUD BY MY EARLY WALK.

A ROSE-BUD by my early walk,
Adown a corn-inclosèd bawk,
Sae gently bent its thorny stalk,
 All on a dewy morning.
Ere twice the shades o' dawn are fled,
In a' its crimson glory spread,
And drooping rich the dewy head,
 It scents the early morning.

Within the bush her cover'd nest
A little linnet fondly prest ;
The dew sat chilly on her breast,
 Sae early in the morning.
She soon shall see her tender brood,
The pride, the pleasure o' the wood,
Among the fresh green leaves bedew'd,
 Awake the early morning.

So thou, dear bird, young Jeany fair,
On trembling string or vocal air,
Shall sweetly pay the tender care
 That tents thy early morning.
So thou, sweet Rose-bud, young and gay,
Shall beauteous blaze upon the day,
And bless the parent's evening ray
 That watch'd thy early morning.

EPITAPH FOR MR. W. CRUICKSHANK.

HONEST Will to Heaven's away
And mony shall lament him ;
His fau'ts they a' in Latin lay,
 In English nane e'er kent them.

THE BANKS OF THE DEVON.¹²¹

How pleasant the banks of the clear winding Devon,
With green spreading bushes and flow'rs blooming fair !
But the boniest flow'r on the banks of the Devon
Was once a sweet bud on the braes of the Ayr.
Mild be the sun on this sweet blushing flower,
In the gay rosy morn, as it bathes in the dew ;
And gently the fall of the soft vernal shower,
That steals on the evening each leaf to renew !
O spare the dear blossom, ye orient breezes,
With chill hoary wing as ye usher the dawn ;
And far be thou distant, thou reptile that seizes
The verdure and pride of the garden or lawn !
Let Bourbon exult in his gay gilded lilies,
And England triumphant display her proud rose :
A fairer than either adorns the green valleys,
Where Devon, sweet Devon, meandering flows.

BRAVING ANGRY WINTER'S STORMS.¹²²

Tune—"Neil Gow's Lament for Abercairny."

WHERE, braving angry winter's storms,
The lofty Ochils rise,
Far in their shade my Peggy's charms
First blest my wondering eyes ;
As one who by some savage stream
A lonely gem surveys,
Astonish'd, doubly marks its beam
With art's most polish'd blaze.
Blest be the wild, sequester'd shade,
And blest the day and hour,
Where Peggy's charms I first survey'd,
When first I felt their pow'r !
The tyrant Death, with grim controul,
May seize my fleeting breath ;
But tearing Peggy from my soul
Must be a stronger death.

MY PEGGY'S CHARMS.¹²³

My Peggy's face, my Peggy's form,
 The frost of hermit Age might warm ;
 My Peggy's worth, my Peggy's mind,
 Might charm the first of human kind.

I love my Peggy's angel air,
 Her face so truly, heavenly fair,
 Her native grace, so void of art,
 But I adore my Peggy's heart.

The lily's hue, the rose's dye,
 The kindling lustre of an eye ;
 Who but owns their magic sway !
 Who but knows they all decay !

The tender thrill, the pitying tear,
 The generous purpose, nobly dear,
 The gentle look that rage disarms—
 These are all immortal charms.

THE YOUNG HIGHLAND ROVER.¹²⁴

Tune—"Morag."

LOUD blaw the frosty breezes,
 The snaws the mountains cover ;
 Like winter on me seizes,
 Since my young Highland rover
 Far wanders nations over.
 Where'er he go, where'er he stray,
 May Heaven be his warden ;
 Return him safe to fair Strathspey,
 And bonie Castle-Gordon.

The trees now naked groaning,
 Shall soon wi' leaves be hinging,
 The birdies dowie moaning,
 Shall a' be blythely singing,
 And every flower be springing ;

Sae I'll rejoice the lee-lang day,
 When (by his mighty Warden)
 My youth's return'd to fair Strathspey,
 And bonie Castle-Gordon.

BIRTHDAY ODE FOR 31ST DECEMBER, 1787.¹²⁵

AFAR the illustrious Exile roams,
 Whom kingdoms on this day should hail;
 An inmate in the casual shed,
 On transient pity's bounty fed,
 Haunted by busy memory's bitter tale!
 Beasts of the forest have their savage homes,
 But he, who should imperial purple wear,
 Owns not the lap of earth where rests his royal head!
 His wretched refuge, dark despair,
 While ravening wrongs and woes pursue,
 And distant far the faithful few
 Who would his sorrows share.
 False flatterer, Hope, away!
 Nor think to lure us as in days of yore:
 We solemnize this sorrowing natal day,
 To prove our loyal truth—we can no more,
 And owning Heaven's mysterious sway,
 Submissive, low, adore.
 Ye honored, mighty Dead,
 Who nobly perished in the glorious cause,
 Your KING, your Country, and her laws,
 From great DUNDEE, who smiling Victory led,
 And fell a Martyr in her arms
 (What breast of northern ice but warms?)
 To bold BALMERINO'S undying name,
 Whose soul of fire, lighted at Heaven's high flame,
 Deserves the proudest wreath departed heroes claim:
 Not unrevenged your fate shall lie,
 It only lags, the fatal hour,
 Your blood shall, with incessant cry,
 Awake at last th' unsparing Power;

As from the cliff, with thundering course,
 The snowy ruin smokes along
 With doubling speed and gathering force,
 Till deep it, crushing, whelms the cottage in the vale.
 So Vengeance' arm, ensanguin'd, strong,
 Shall with resistless might assail,
 Usurping Brunswick's pride shall lay,
 And STEWART'S wrongs and yours, with tenfold weight, repay

PERDITION, baleful child of night!
 Rise and revenge the injured right
 Of STEWART'S royal race:
 Lead on the unmuzzled hounds of hell,
 Till all the frightened echoes tell
 The blood-notes of the chase!
 Full on the quarry point their view,
 Full on the base, usurping crew,
 The tools of faction, and the nation's curse!
 Hark how the cry grows on the wind;
 They leave the lagging gale behind,
 Their savage fury, pityless, they pour;
 With murder on their eyes already they devour;
 See Brunswick spent, a wretched prey,
 His life one poor despairing day,
 Where each avenging hour still ushers in a worse!
 Such havock, howling all abroad,
 Their utter ruin bring;
 The base apostates to their GOD,
 Or rebels to their KING.

ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT DUNDAS, ESQ.,
 OF ARNISTON,¹²⁶

LATE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF SESSION.

LONE on the bleaky hills the straying flocks
 Shun the fierce storms among the sheltering rocks;
 Down from the rivulets, red with dashing rains,
 The gathering floods burst o'er the distant plains;

Beneath the blast the leafless forests groan ;
The hollow caves return a sullen moan.

Ye hills, ye plains, ye forests, and ye caves,
Ye howling winds, and wintry swelling waves !
Unheard, unseen, by human ear or eye,
Sad to your sympathetic glooms I fly ;
Where, to the whistling blast and water's roar,
Pale Scotia's recent wound I may deplore.

O heavy loss, thy country ill could bear !
A loss these evil days can ne'er repair !
Justice, the high vicegerent of her God,
Her doubtful balance eyed, and sway'd her rod :
Hearing the tidings of the fatal blow,
She sank, abandon'd to the wildest woe.

Wrongs, injuries, from many a darksome den,
Now, gay in hope, explore the paths of men :
See from his cavern grim Oppression rise,
And throw on Poverty his cruel eyes :
Keen on the helpless victim see him fly,
And stifle, dark, the feebly-bursting cry :
Mark ruffian Violence, distained with crimes,
Rousing elate in these degenerate times ;
View unsuspecting Innocence a prey,
As guileful Fraud points out the erring way :
While subtle Litigation's pliant tongue
The life-blood equal sucks of Right and Wrong :
Hark, injur'd Want recounts th' unlisten'd tale,
And much-wrong'd Mis'ry pours th' unpitied wail !

Ye dark, waste hills, ye brown unsightly plains,
Congenial scenes, ye soothe my mournful strains :
Ye tempests, rage ! ye turbid torrents, roll !
Ye suit the joyless tenor of my soul.
Life's social haunts and pleasures I resign ;
Be nameless wilds and lonely wanderings mine,
To mourn the woes my country must endure—
That wound degenerate ages cannot cure.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA.¹²⁷

WHEN dear Clarinda, matchless fair,
 First struck Sylvander's raptur'd view,
 He gaz'd, he listened, to despair,
 Alas! 'twas all he dared to do.

Love, from Clarinda's heavenly eyes,
 Transfix'd his bosom thro' and thro';
 But still in Friendship's guarded guise,
 For more the demon fear'd to do.

That heart, already more than lost,
 The imp beleaguerr'd all *perdue*;
 For frowning Honor kept his post—
 To meet that frown he shrunk to do.

His pangs the Bard refused to own,
 Tho' half he wish'd Clarinda knew;
 But Anguish wrung the unweaving groan—
 Who blames what frantic Pain must do?

That heart, where motley follies blend,
 Was sternly still to Honor true:
 To prove Clarinda's fondest friend,
 Was what a lover sure might do.

The Muse his ready quill employed,
 Nor nearer bliss he could pursue;
 This bliss Clarinda cold deny'd—
 "Send word by Charles how you do!"

The chill behest disarm'd his muse,
 Till passion, all impatient grew:
 He wrote, and hinted for excuse,
 'Twas, 'cause "he'd nothing else to do."

But by those hopes I have above!
 And by those faults I dearly rue!
 The deed, the boldest mark of love,
 For thee, that deed I dare to do!

O could the Fates but name the price
 Would bless me with your charms and you!
 With frantic joy I'd pay it thrice,
 If human art and power could do!

Then take, Clarinda, friendship's hand
 (Friendship, at least, I may avow),
 And lay no more your chill command,—
 I'll write, whatever I've to do.

SYLVANDER.

CLARINDA, MISTRESS OF MY SOUL.

CLARINDA, mistress of my soul,
 The measur'd time is run!
 The wretch beneath the dreary pole
 So marks his latest sun.

To what dark cave of frozen night
 Shall poor Sylvander hie;
 Depriv'd of thee, his life and light,
 The sun of all his joy.

We part—but by these precious drops,
 That fill thy lovely eyes,
 No other light shall guide my steps,
 Till thy bright beams arise!

She, the fair sun of all her sex,
 Has blest my glorious day;
 And shall a glimmering planet fix
 My worship to its ray?

I'M O'ER YOUNG TO MARRY YET.¹²⁸

Chorus.—I'm o'er young, I'm o'er young,
 I'm o'er young to marry yet;
 I'm o'er young, 'twad be a sin
 To tak me frae my mammy yet.

I AM my mammy's ae bairn,
 Wi' unco folk I weary, sir;
 And lying in a strange bed,
 I'm fley'd it mak me eerie, sir.
 I'm o'er young, etc.

Hallowmass is come and gane,
 The nights are lang in winter, sir,
 And you an' I in ae bed,
 In trowth, I dare na venture, sir.
 I'm o'er young, etc.

Fu' loud an' shill the frosty wind
 Blaws thro' the leafless timmer, sir;
 But if ye come this gate again,
 I'll aulder be gin summer, sir.
 I'm o'er young, etc.

TO THE WEAVER'S GIN YOU GO.¹²⁹

My heart was ance as blythe and free
 As simmer days were lang,
 But a bonie, westlin weaver lad
 Has gart me change my sang.

Chorus.—To the weaver's gin ye go, fair maids,
 To the weaver's gin ye go;
 I rede you right, gang ne'er at night,
 To the weaver's gin ye go.

My mither sent me to the town,
 To warp a plaiden wab;
 But the weary, weary warpin o't
 Has gart me sigh and sab.
 To the weaver's, etc.

A bonie, westlin weaver lad
 Sat working at his loom;
 He took my heart as wi' a net,
 In every knot and thrum.
 To the weaver's, etc.

I sat beside my warpin-wheel,
 And ay I ca'd it roun';
 But every shot and every knock,
 My heart it gae a stoun.

To the weaver's, etc.

The moon was sinking in the west,
 Wi' visage pale and wan,
 As my bome, westlin weaver lad
 Convoy'd me thro' the glen.

To the weaver's, etc.

But what was said, or what was done,
 Shame fa' me gin I tell;
 But Oh! I fear the kintra soon
 Will ken as weel's mysel!

To the weaver's, etc.

M'PHERSON'S FAREWELL.¹⁸⁰

Tune—"M'Pherson's Rant."

FAREWELL, ye dungeons dark and strong,
 The wretch's destinie!
 M'Pherson's time will not be long
 On yonder gallows-tree.

Chorus.—Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
 Sae dauntingly gaed he;
 He play'd a spring, and danc'd it round,
 Below the gallows-tree.

O what is death but parting breath?
 On many a bloody plain
 I've dared his face, and in this place
 I scorn him yet again!
 Sae rantingly, etc.

Untie these bands from off my hands,
 And bring to me my sword;
 And there's no a man in all Scotland,
 But I'll brave him at a word.
 Sae rantingly, etc.

I've liv'd a life of sturt and strife ;
 I die by treacherie :
 It burns my heart I must depart,
 And not avengèd be.
 Sae rantingly, etc

Now farewell light, thou sunshine bright,
 And all beneath the sky !
 May coward shame distain his name,
 The wretch that dare not die !
 Sae rantingly, etc.

STAY, MY CHARMER.

Gaelic Air—"The Black-haired Lad."

STAY, my charmer, can you leave me ?
 Cruel, cruel to deceive me ,
 Well you know how much you grieve me ;
 Cruel charmer, can you go ?
 Cruel charmer, can you go ?

By my love so ill-requited,
 By the faith you fondly plighted,
 By the pangs of lovers slighted,
 Do not, do not leave me so !
 Do not, do not leave me so !

MY HOGGIE.¹³¹

WHAT will I do gin my Hoggie die ?
 My joy, my pride, my Hoggie !
 My only beast, I had nae mae,
 And vow but I was vogie !
 The lee-lang night we watch'd the fauld,
 Me and my faithfu' doggie ;
 We heard nocht but the roaring linn,
 Amang the braes sae scroggie.

But the houlet cry'd frae the castle wa',
 The blitter frae the boggie ;
 The tod reply'd upon the hill,
 I trembled for my Hoggie.
 When day did daw, and cocks did crow,
 The morning it was foggie ;
 An unco tyke, lap o'er the dyke,
 And maist has kill'd my Hoggie!

THE CARES O' LOVE.¹³²

HE.

THE cares o' Love are sweeter far
 Than onie other pleasure ;
 And if sae dear its sorrows are,
 Enjoyment, what a treasure!

SHE.

I fear to try, I dare na try
 A passion sae ensnaring ;
 For light's her heart and blythe's her sang
 That for nae man is caring.

RAVING WINDS AROUND HER BLOWING.¹³³

Tune—"M'Grigor of Roro's Lament."

RAVING winds around her blowing,
 Yellow leaves the woodlands strowing,
 By a river hoarsely roaring,
 Isabella stray'd deploring—
 "Farewell, hours that late did measure
 Sunshine days of joy and pleasure ;
 Hail, thou gloomy night of sorrow,
 Cheerless night that knows no morrow!
 "O'er the past too fondly wandering,
 On the hopeless future pondering ;
 Chilly grief my life-blood freezes,
 Fell despair my fancy seizes.

"Life, thou soul of every blessing,
 Load to misery most distressing,
 Gladly how would I resign thee,
 And to dark oblivion join thee!"

UP IN THE MORNING EARLY.¹³⁴

CAULD blaws the wind frae east to west,
 The drift is driving sairly;
 Sae loud and shill 's I hear the blast—
 I'm sure it's winter fairly.

Chorus.---Up in the morning's no for me,
 Up in the morning early;
 When a' the hills are cover'd wi' snaw,
 I'm sure it's winter fairly.

The birds sit chittering in the thorn,
 A' day they fare but sparely;
 And lang's the night frae e'en to morn—
 I'm sure it's winter fairly.
 Up in the morning's, etc.

HOW LONG AND DREARY IS THE NIGHT.

How long and dreary is the night,
 When I am frae my dearie!
 I sleepless lie frae e'en to morn,
 Tho' I were ne'er so weary:
 I sleepless lie frae e'en to morn,
 Tho' I were ne'er sae weary!

When I think on the happy days
 I spent wi' you, my dearie:
 And now what lands between us lie,
 How can I be but eerie?
 And now what lands between us lie,
 How can I be but eerie?

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours,
As ye were wae and weary !
It was na sae—ye glinted by,
When I was wi' my dearie !
It was na sae—ye glinted by,
When I was wi' my dearie !

THE DUSTY MILLER.

HEY, the dusty Miller,
And his dusty coat,
He will win a shilling,
Or he spend a groat :
Dusty was the coat,
Dusty was the colour,
Dusty was the kiss
That I gat frae the Miller.

Hey, the dusty Miller,
And his dusty sack :
Leeze me on the calling
Fills the dusty peck,
Fills the dusty peck,
Brings the dusty siller ;
I wad gae my coatie
For the dusty Miller.

DUNCAN DAVIDSON.

THERE was a lass, they ca'd her Meg,
And she held o'er the moors to spin ;
There was a lad that follow'd her,
They ca'd him Duncan Davidson.
The moon was dreigh, and Meg was skeigh,
Her favour Duncan could na win ;
For wi' the rock she wad him knock,
And ay she shook the temper-pin.

As o'er the moor they lightly foor,
 A burn was clear, a glen was green,
 Upon the banks they eas'd their shanks,
 And ay she set the wheel between :
 But Duncan swoor a haly aith,
 That Meg should be a bride the morn ,
 Then Meg took up her spinnin-graith,
 And flang them a' out o'er the burn.

We will big a wee, wee house,
 And we will live like king and queen ;
 Sae blythe and merry 's we will be,
 When ye set by the wheel at e'en.
 A man may drink, and no be drunk ;
 A man may fight and no be slain ;
 A man may kiss a bonie lass,
 And ay be welcome back again !

JUMPIN JOHN.

HER daddie forbad, her minnie forbad,
 Forbidden she wadna be :
 She wadna trow't, the browst she brew'd
 Wad taste sae bitterlie.

Chorus—The lang lad they ca' Jumpin John
 Beguil'd the bonie lassie,
 The lang lad they ca' Jumpin John
 Beguil'd the bonie lassie.

A cow and a cauf, a yowe and a hauf,
 And thretty gude shillins and three ;
 A vera gude tocher, a cotter-man's dochter,
 The lass wi' the bonie black e'e.
 The lang lad, etc.

TALK OF HIM THAT'S FAR AWA'.

MUSING on the roaring ocean,
Which divides my love and me ;
Wearying heav'n in warm devotion,
For his weal where'er he be.

Hope and Fear's alternate billow
Yielding late to Nature's law,
Whispering spirits round my pillow,
Talk of him that's far awa',

Ye whom sorrow never wounded,
Ye who never shed a tear,
Care-untroubled, joy-surrounded,
Gaudy day to you is dear.

Gentle night, do thou befriend me,
Downy sleep, the curtain draw ;
Spirits kind, again attend me,
Talk of him that's far awa'!

TO DAUNTON ME.

THE blude red rose at Yule may blaw,
The simmer lilies bloom in snaw,
The frost may freeze the dēepest sea ;
But an auld man shall never daunton me.

Refrain.—To daunton me, to daunton me,
An auld man shall never daunton me.

To daunton me, and me sae young,
Wi' his fause heart and flatt'ring tongue,
That is the thing you shall never see,
For an auld man shall never daunton me.
To daunton me, etc.

For a' his meal and a' his maut,
 For a' his fresh beef and his saut,
 For a' his gold and white monie,
 An auld man shall never daunton me.
 To daunton me, etc.

His gear may buy him kye and yowes,
 His gear may buy him glens and knowes ;
 But me he shall not buy nor fee,
 For an auld man shall never daunton me.
 To daunton me, etc.

He hirples twa-fauld as he dow,
 Wi' his toothless gab and his auld beld pow,
 And the rain rains down frae his red blear'd e'e ;
 That auld man shall never daunton me.
 To daunton me, etc.

THE WINTER IT IS PAST.¹³⁵

THE winter it is past, and the summer comes at last,
 And the small birds, they sing on ev'ry tree ;
 Now ev'ry thing is glad, while I am very sad,
 Since my true love is parted from me.

The rose upon the breer, by the waters running clear,
 May have charms for the linnet or the bee ;
 Their little loves are blest, and their little hearts at rest,
 But my true love is parted from me.

THE BONIE LAD THAT'S FAR AWA'.^{135 a}

O HOW can I be blythe and glad,
 Or how can I gang brisk and braw,
 When the bonie lad that I lo'e best
 Is o'er the hills and far awa' !

It's no the frosty winter wind,
 It's no the driving drift and snaw ;
 But ay the tear comes in my e'e,
 To think on him that's far awa'.

My father pat me frae his door,
 My friends they hae disown'd me a' ;
 But I hae ane will tak my part,
 The bonie lad that's far awa'.

A pair o' glooves he bought to me,
 And silken snoods he gae me twa ;
 And I will wear them for his sake,
 The bonie lad that's far awa'.

O weary Winter soon will pass,
 And Spring will cleed the birken shaw ;
 And my young babie will be born,
 And he'll be hame that's far awa'.

VERSES TO CLARINDA.

SENT WITH A PAIR OF WINE-GLASSES.

FAIR Empress of the poet's soul,
 And Queen of poetesses ;
 Clarinda, take this little boon,
 This humble pair of glasses :

And fill them up with generous juice,
 As generous as your mind ;
 And pledge them to the generous toast,
 " The whole of human kind !"

" To those who love us !" second fill ;
 But not to those whom *we* love ;
 Lest we love those who love not us—
 A third—" To thee and me, love !"

THE CHEVALIER'S LAMENT.¹³⁶*Air*—"Captain O'Kean."

THE small birds rejoice in the green leaves returning,
 The murmuring streamlet winds clear thro' the vale ;
 The primroses blow in the dews of the morning,
 And wild scatter'd cowslips bedeck the green dale :
 But what can give pleasure, or what can seem fair,
 When the lingering moments are numbered wi' care ?
 No birds sweetly singing, nor flow'rs gaily springing,
 Can soothe the sad bosom of joyless despair.

The deed that I dar'd, could it merit their malice ?
 A king and a father to place on his throne !
 His right are these hills, and his right are these valleys,
 Where the wild beasts find shelter, tho' I can find none !
 But 'tis not my suff'rings thus wretched, forlorn ;
 My brave gallant friends, 'tis your ruin I mourn ;
 Your faith proved so loyal in hot-bloody trial—
 Alas ! can I make it no better return !

EPISTLE TO HUGH PARKER.¹³⁷

IN this strange land, this uncouth clime,
 A land unknown to prose or rhyme ;
 Where words ne'er cros't the Muse's heckles,
 Nor limpit in poetic shackles :
 A land that Prose did never view it,
 Except when drunk he stacher't thro' it ;
 Here, ambush'd by the chimla cheek,
 Hid in an atmosphere of reek,
 I hear a wheel thrum i' the neuk,
 I hear it—for in vain I leuk.
 The red peat gleams, a fiery kernel,
 Enhuskèd by a fog infernal :
 Here, for my wonted rhyming raptures,
 I sit and count my sins by chapters ;

For life and spunk like ither Christians,
 I'm dwindled down to mere existence,
 Wi' nae converse but Gallowa' bodies,
 Wi' nae kenn'd face but "Jenny Geddes,"
 Jenny, my Pegasean pride!
 Dowie she saunters down Nithside,
 And ay a westlin leuk she throws,
 While tears hap o'er her auld brown nose!
 Was it for this, wi' cannie care,
 Thou bure the Bard through many a shire?
 At howes or hillocks never stumbled,
 And late or early never grumbled?—
 O had I power like inclination,
 I'd heeze thee up a constellation,
 To canter with the Sagitarre,
 Or loup the ecliptic like a bar;
 Or turn the pole like any arrow;
 Or, when auld Phœbus bids good-morrow,
 Down the zodiac urge the race,
 And cast dirt on his godship's face;
 For I could lay my bread and kail
 He'd ne'er cast saut upo' thy tail.—
 Wi' a' this care and a' this grief,
 And sma', sma' prospect of relief,
 And nought but peat reek i' my head,
 How can I write what ye can read?—
 Tarbolton, twenty-fourth o' June,
 Ye'll find me in a better tune;
 But till we meet and weet our whistle,
 Tak this excuse for nae epistle.

ROBERT BURNS.

OF A' THE AIRTS THE WIND CAN BLAW.¹³⁸

Tune—"Miss Admiral Gordon's Strathspey."

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw,
 I dearly like the west,
 For there the bonie lassie lives,
 The lassie I lo'e best:

There's wild-woods grow, and rivers row,
 And mony a hill between :
 But day and night my fancy's flight
 Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
 I see her sweet and fair :
 I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
 I hear her charm the air :
 There's not a bonie flower that springs,
 By fountain, shaw, or green ;
 There's not a bonie bird that sings,
 But minds me o' my Jean.

I HAE A WIFE O' MY AIN.¹³⁹

I HAE a wife o' my ain,
 I'll partake wi' naebody ;
 I'll take cuckold frae nane,
 I'll gie cuckold to naebody.
 I hae a penny to spend,
 There—thanks to naebody !
 I hae naething to lend,
 I'll borrow frae naebody.
 I am naebody's lord,
 I'll be slave to naebody ;
 I hae a gude braid sword,
 I'll tak dunts frae naebody.
 I'll be merry and free,
 I'll be sad for naebody ;
 Naebody cares for me,
 I care for naebody.

VERSES IN FRIAR'S CARSE HERMITAGE.¹⁴⁰

THOU whom chance may hither lead,
 Be thou clad in russet weed,
 Be thou deckt in silken stole,
 Grave these maxims on thy soul.

Life is but a day at most,
 Sprung from night in darkness lost ;
 Hope not sunshine every hour,
 Fear not clouds will always lour.
 Happiness is but a name,
 Make content and ease thy aim,
 Ambition is a meteor-gleam ;
 Fame a restless, idle dream ;
 Peace, th' tend'rest flow'r of spring ;
 Pleasures, insects on the wing ;
 Those that sip the dew alone—
 Make the butterflies thy own ;
 Those that would the bloom devour—
 Crush the locusts, save the flower.
 For the future be prepar'd,
 Guard wherever thou can'st guard ;
 But thy utmost duly done,
 Welcome what thou can'st not shun.
 Follies past, give thou to air,
 Make their *consequence* thy care :
 Keep the name of Man in mind,
 And dishonour not thy kind.
 Reverence with lowly heart
 Him, whose wondrous work thou art ;
 Keep His Goodness still in view,
 Thy trust, and thy example, too.
 Stranger, go ! Heaven be thy guide !
 Quod the Beadsman of Nidside.

TO ALEX. CUNNINGHAM, ESQ., WRITER,
 EDINBURGH.¹⁴¹

ELLISLAND, NITHSDALE, *July 27, 1788.*

MY godlike friend—nay, do not stare,
 You think the phrase is odd-like ;
 But “God is Love,” the saints declare,
 Then surely thou art god-like.

And is thy ardour still the same ?
 And kindled still at ANNA ?
 Others may boast a partial flame,
 But thou art a volcano !
 Ev'n Wedlock asks not love beyond
 Death's tie-dissolving portal ;
 But thou, omnipotently fond,
 May'st promise love immortal !
 Thy wounds such healing powers defy,
 Such symptoms dire attend them,
 That last great antihectic try—
 MARRIAGE perhaps may mend them.
 Sweet Anna has an air—a grace,
 Divine, magnetic, touching ,
 She talks, she charms—but who can trace
 The process of bewitching ?

ANNA, THY CHARMS

ANNA, thy charms my bosom fire,
 And waste my soul with care ;
 But ah ! how bootless to admire,
 When fated to despair !
 Yet in thy presence, lovely Fair,
 To hope may be forgiven ;
 For sure 'twere impious to despair
 So much in sight of Heaven.

THE FÊTE CHAMPETRE.¹⁴²

Tune—" Killicrankie."

O WHA will to Saint Stephen's House,
 To do our errands there, man ?
 O wha will to Saint Stephen's House
 O' th' merry lads of Ayr, man ?
 Or will we send a man o' law ?
 Or will we send a sodger ?
 Or him wha led o'er Scotland a'
 The meikle Ursa-Major ?

Come, will ye court a noble lord,
Or buy a score o' lairds, man ?
For worth and honour pawn their word,
Their vote shall be Glencaird's, man.
Ane gies them coin, ane gies them wine,
Anither gies them clatter ;
Annbank, wha guessed the ladies' taste,
He gies a Fête Champetre.

When Love and Beauty heard the news,
The gay green woods amang, man ;
Where, gathering flowers, and busking bowers,
They heard the blackbird's sang, man :
A vow, they seal'd it with a kiss,
Sir Politics to fetter ;
As their's alone, the patent bliss,
To hold a Fête Champetre.

Then mounted Mirth on gleesome wing,
O'er hill and dale she flew, man ;
Ilk wimpling burn, ilk crystal spring,
Ilk glen and shaw she knew, man :
She summon'd every social sprite,
That sports by wood or water,
On th' bonie banks of Ayr to meet,
And keep this Fête Champetre.

Cauld Boreas, wi' his boisterous crew,
Were bound to stakes like kye, man ;
And Cynthia's car, o' silver fu',
Clamb up the starry sky, man :
Reflected beams dwell in the streams,
Or down the current shatter ;
The western breeze steals thro' the trees,
To view this Fête Champetre.

How many a robe sae gaily floats !
What sparkling jewels glance, man !
To Harmony's enchanting notes,
As moves the mazy dance, man.

The echoing wood, the winding flood,
 Like Paradise did glitter,
 When angels met, at Adam's yett,
 To hold their Fête Champetre.

When Politics came there, to mix
 And make his ether-stane, man!
 He circled round the magic ground,
 But entrance found he nane, man :
 He blush'd for shame, he quat his name,
 Forswore it, every letter,
 Wi' humble prayer to join and share
 This festive Fête Champetre.

EPISTLE TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ., OF FINTRY,¹⁴³

REQUESTING A FAVOUR.

WHEN Nature her great masterpiece design'd,
 And fram'd her last, best work, the human mind,
 Her eye intent on all the mazy plan,
 She form'd of various parts the various Man.

Then first she calls the useful many forth ;
 Plain plodding Industry, and sober Worth :
 Thence peasants, farmers, native sons of earth,
 And merchandise' whole genus take their birth :
 Each prudent cit a warm existence finds,
 And all mechanics' many-apron'd kinds.
 Some other rarer sorts are wanted yet,
 The lead and buoy are needful to the net :
 The *caput mortuum* of gross desires
 Makes a material for mere knights and squires ;
 The martial phosphorus is taught to flow,
 She kneads the lumpish philosophic dough,
 Then marks th' unyielding mass with grave designs,
 Law, physic, politics, and deep divines ;
 Last, she sublimes th' Aurora of the poles,
 The flashing elements of female souls.

The order'd system fair before her stood,
 Nature, well pleas'd, pronounc'd it very good ;
 But ere she gave creating labour o'er,
 Half-jest, she tried one curious labour more.
 Some spumy, fiery, *ignis fatuus* matter,
 Such as the slightest breath of air might scatter ;
 With arch-alacrity and conscious glee
 (Nature may have her whim as well as we,
 Her Hogarth-art perhaps she meant to show it),
 She forms the thing and christens it—a Poet :
 Creature, tho' oft the prey of care and sorrow,
 When blest to-day, unmindful of to-morrow ;
 A being form'd t' amuse his graver friends,
 Admir'd and prais'd—and there the homage ends ;
 A mortal quite unfit for Fortune's strife,
 Yet oft the sport of all the ills of life ;
 Prone to enjoy each pleasure riches give,
 Yet haply wanting wherewithal to live ;
 Longing to wipe each tear, to heal each groan,
 Yet frequent all unheeded in his own.
 But honest Nature is not quite a Turk,
 She laugh'd at first, then felt for her poor work :
 Pitying the propless climber of mankind,
 She cast about a *standard tree* to find ;
 And, to support his helpless woodbine state,
 Attach'd him to the generous, truly great :
 A title, and the only one I claim,
 To lay strong hold for help on bounteous Graham.

Pity the tuneful Muses' hapless train,
 Weak, timid landsmen on life's stormy main !
 Their hearts no selfish, stern, absorbent stuff,
 That never gives—tho' humbly takes enough ;
 The little fate allows, they share as soon,
 Unlike sage, proverb'd Wisdom's hard-wrung boon :
 The world were blest did bliss on them depend,
 Ah, that "the friendly e'er should want a friend !"

Let Prudence number o'er each sturdy son,
Who life and wisdom at one race begun,
Who feel by reason and who give by rule,
(Instinct's a brute, and sentiment a fool!)
Who make poor "will do" wait upon "I should"—
We own they're prudent, but who feels they're good?
Ye wise ones, hence! ye hurt the social eye!
God's image rudely etch'd on base alloy!
But come ye who the godlike pleasure know,
Heaven's attribute distinguish'd—to bestow!
Whose arms of love would grasp the human race:
Come *thou* who giv'st with all a courtier's grace;
FRIEND OF MY LIFE, true patron of my rhymes!
Prop of my dearest hopes for future times.
Why shrinks my soul half blushing, half afraid,
Backward, abash'd to ask thy friendly aid?
I know my need, I know thy giving hand,
I crave thy friendship at thy kind command;
But there are such who court the tuneful Nine—
Heavens! should the branded character be mine!
Whose *verse* in manhood's pride sublimely flows,
Yet vilest reptiles in their begging *prose*.
Mark, how their lofty independent spirit
Soars on the spurning wing of injur'd merit!
Seek you the proofs in private life to find?
Pity the best of words should be but wind!
So, to heaven's gates the larks shrill song ascends,
But grovelling on the earth the carol ends.
In all the clam'rous cry of starving want,
They dun Benevolence with shameless front;
Oblige them, patronise their tinsel lays—
They persecute you all your future days!
Ere my poor soul such deep damnation stain,
My horny fist assume the plough again,
The pie-bald jacket let me patch once more,
On eighteenpence a week I've liv'd before.

Tho', thanks to Heaven, I dare even that last shift,
 I trust, meantime, my boon is in thy gift :
 That, plac'd by thee upon the wish'd-for height,
 Where, man and nature fairer in her sight,
 My Muse may imp her wing for some sublimer flight.

THE DAY RETURNS.¹⁴⁴

Tune—"Seventh of November."

THE day returns, my bosom burns,
 The blissful day we twa did meet :
 Tho' winter wild in tempest toil'd,
 Ne'er summer-sun was half sae sweet.
 Than a' the pride that loads the tide,
 And crosses o'er the sultry line ;
 Than kingly robes, than crowns and globes,
 Heav'n gave me more—it made thee mine !
 While day and night can bring delight,
 Or Nature aught of pleasure give ;
 While joys above my mind can move,
 For thee, and thee alone I live.
 When that grim foe of life below
 Comes in between to make us part,
 The iron hand that breaks our band,
 It breaks my bliss—it breaks my heart !

A MOTHER'S LAMENT¹⁴⁵

FOR THE DEATH OF HER SON.

FATE gave the word, the arrow sped,
 And pierc'd my darling's heart ;
 And with him all the joys are fled
 Life can to me impart.
 By cruel hands the sapling drops,
 In dust dishonor'd laid ;
 So fell the pride of all my hopes,
 My age's future shade.

The mother-linnet in the brake
 Bewails her ravish'd young ;
 So I, for my lost darling's sake,
 Lament the live-day long.

Death, oft I've fear'd thy fatal blow,
 Now, fond, I bare my breast ;
 O, do thou kindly lay me low
 With him I love, at rest !

O WERE I ON PARNASSUS HILL.¹⁴⁶

O WERE I on Parnassus hill,
 Or had o' Helicon my fill,
 That I might catch poetic skill,
 To sing how dear I love thee !
 But Nith maun be my Muse's well,
 My Muse maun be thy bonie sel',
 On Corsincon I'll glowr and spell,
 And write how dear I love thee.

Then come, sweet Muse, inspire my lay !
 For a' the lee-lang simmer's day
 I couldna sing, I couldna say,
 How much, how dear, I love thee,
 I see thee dancing o'er the green,
 Thy waist sae jump, thy limbs sae clean,
 Thy tempting lips, thy roguish een—
 By Heav'n and Earth I love thee !

By night, by day, a-field, at hame,
 The thoughts o' thee my breast inflame ;
 And ay I muse and sing thy name—
 I only live to love thee.
 Tho' I were doom'd to wander on,
 Beyond the sea, beyond the sun,
 Till my last weary sand was run ;
 Till then—and then I love thee !

THE FALL OF THE LEAF.

THE lazy mist hangs from the brow of the hill,
Concealing the course of the dark winding rill;
How languid the scenes, late so sprightly, appear!
As Autumn to Winter resigns the pale year.

The forests are leafless, the meadows are brown,
And all the gay foppery of summer is flown:
Apart let me wander, apart let me muse,
How quick Time is flying, how keen Fate pursues!

How long I have liv'd—but how much liv'd in vain,
How little of life's scanty span may remain,
What aspects old Time in his progress has worn,
What ties cruel Fate in my bosom has torn.

How foolish, or worse, till our summit is gain'd!
And downward, how weaken'd, how darken'd, how pain'd!
Life is not worth having with all it can give—
For something beyond it poor man sure must live.

I REIGN IN JEANIE'S BOSOM.

LOUIS, what reck I by thee,
Or Geordie on his ocean?
Dyvor, beggar louns to me,
I reign in Jeanie's bosom!

Let her crown my love her law,
And in her breast enthrone me,
Kings and nations—swith awa!
Reif randies, I disown ye!

IT IS NA, JEAN, THY BONIE FACE.

IT is na, Jean, thy bonie face
Nor shape that I admire;
Altho' thy beauty and thy grace
Might weel awauk desire.

Something, in ilka part o' thee,
To praise, to love, I find,
But dear as is thy form to me,
Still dearer is thy mind.

Nae mair ungenerous wish I hae,
Nor stronger in my breast,
Than, if I canna mak thee sae,
At least to see thee blest.

Content am I, if heaven shall give
But happiness to thee ;
And as wi' thee I'd wish to live,
For thee I'd bear to die.

AULD LANG SYNE.¹⁴⁷

SHOULD auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind ?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne ?

Chorus.—For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne,

And surely ye'll be your pint stowp !
And surely I'll be mine !
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.
For auld, etc.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pou'd the gowans fine ,
But we've wander'd mony a weary fitt,
Sin' auld lang syne.
For auld, etc

We twa hae paidl'd in the burn,
 Frae morning sun till dine ;
 But seas between us braid hae roar'd
 Sin' auld lang syne.
 For auld, etc.

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere !
 And gie's a hand o' thine !
 And we'll tak a right gude-willie waught,
 For auld lang syne.
 For auld, etc.

THE SILVER TASSIE.¹⁴⁸

GO, fetch to me a pint o' wine,
 And fill it in a silver tassie ;
 That I may drink before I go,
 A service to my bonie lassie.
 The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith ;
 Fu' loud the wind blows frae the Ferry ;
 The ship rides by the Berwick-law,
 And I maun leave my bonie Mary.

The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
 The glittering spears are rankèd ready :
 The shouts o' war are heard afar,
 The battle closes deep and bloody ;
 It's not the roar o' sea or shore,
 Wad mak me langer wish to tarry ;
 Nor shouts o' war that's heard afar—
 It's leaving thee, my bonie Mary !

TO A KISS.¹⁴⁹

HUMID seal of soft affections,
 Tenderest pledge of future bliss,
 Dearest tie of young connections,
 Love's first snowdrop, virgin kiss !

Speaking silence, dumb confession,
 Passion's birth, and infant's play,
 Dove-like fondness, chaste concession,
 Glowing dawn of future day!
 Sorrowing joy, Adieu's last action
 (Lingering lips must now disjoin),
 What words can ever speak affection
 So thrilling and sincere as thine!

WRITTEN IN FRIARS CARSE HERMITAGE, ON
 NITHSIDE.¹⁵⁰

LATER VERSION.

THOU whom chance may hither lead,
 Be thou clad in russet weed,
 Be thou dekt in silken stole,
 Grave these counsels on thy soul.

Life is but a day at most,
 Sprung from night,—in darkness lost;
 Hope not sunshine ev'ry hour,
 Fear not clouds will always lour.

As Youth and Love, with sprightly dance,
 Beneath thy morning star advance,
 Pleasure with her siren air
 May delude the thoughtless pair;
 Let Prudence bless Enjoyment's cup,
 Then raptur'd sip, and sip it up.

As thy day grows warm and high,
 Life's meridian flaming nigh,
 Dost thou spurn the humble vale?
 Life's proud summits would'st thou scale?
 Check thy climbing step, elate,
 Evils lurk in felon wait:
 Dangers, eagle-pinioned, bold,
 Soar around each cliffy hold!
 While cheerful Peace, with linnet song,
 Chants the lowly dells among.

As the shades of ev'ning close,
 Beck'ning thee to long repose ;
 As life itself becomes disease,
 Seek the chimney-nook of ease :
 There ruminate with sober thought,
 On all thou'st seen, and heard, and wrought,
 And teach the sportive youngers round,
 Saws of experience, sage and sound :
 Say, man's true, genuine estimate,
 The grand criterion of his fate,
 Is not, art thou high or low ?
 Did thy fortune ebb or flow ?
 Did many talents gild thy span ?
 Or frugal Nature grudge thee one ?
 Tell them, and press it on their mind,
 As thou thyself must shortly find,
 The smile or frown of awful Heav'n,
 To Virtue or to Vice is giv'n,
 Say, to be just, and kind, and wise—
 There solid self-enjoyment lies ;
 That foolish, selfish, faithless ways
 Lead to be wretched, vile, and base.

Thus resign'd and quiet, creep
 To the bed of lasting sleep,—
 Sleep, whence thou shalt ne'er awake,
 Night, where dawn shall never break,
 Till future life, future no more,
 To light and joy the good restore,
 To light and joy unknown before.
 Stranger, go ! Heav'n be thy guide !
 Quod the Beadsman of Nithside.

THE POET'S PROGRESS.¹⁵¹

A POEM IN EMBRYO.

THOU, Nature, partial Nature, I arraign ;
 Of thy caprice maternal I complain.

The peopled fold thy kindly care have found,
The horned bull, tremendous, spurns the ground ;
The lordly lion has enough and more,
The forest trembles at his very roar ;
Thou giv'st the ass his hide, the snail his shell,
The puny wasp, victorious, guards his cell.
Thy minions, kings defend, controul, devour,
In all th' omnipotence of rule and power :
Foxes and statesmen subtle wiles ensure ;
The cit and polecat stunk, and are secure :
Toads with their poison, doctors with their drug,
The priest and hedgehog, in their robes, are snug :
E'en silly women have defensive arts,
Their eyes, their tongues—and nameless other parts.

But O thou cruel stepmother and hard,
To thy poor fenceless, naked child, the Bard!
A thing unteachable in worldly skill,
And half an idiot too, more helpless still :
No heels to bear him from the op'ning dun,
No claws to dig, his hated sight to shun :
No horns, but those by luckless Hymen worn,
And those, alas! not Amalthea's horn :
No nerves olfact'ry, true to Mammon's foot,
Or grunting, grub sagacious, evil's root :
The silly sheep that wanders wild astray,
Is not more friendless, is not more a prey ;
Vampyre-booksellers drain him to the heart,
And viper-critics cureless venom dart.

Critics! appall'd I venture on the name,
Those cut-throat bandits in the paths of fame,
Bloody dissectors, worse than ten Monroes,
He hacks to teach, they mangle to expose :
By blockhead's daring into madness stung,
His heart by wanton, causeless malice wrung,
His well-won bays—than life itself more dear—
By miscreants torn who ne'er one sprig must wear ;

Foil'd, bleeding, tortur'd in th' unequal strife,
 The hapless Poet flounces on thro' life,
 Till, fled each hope that once his bosom fired,
 And fled each Muse that glorious once inspir'd,
 Low-sunk in squalid, unprotected age,
 Dead even resentment for his injur'd page,
 He heeds no more the ruthless critics' rage.

So by some hedge the generous steed deceas'd,
 For half-starv'd, snarling curs a dainty feast ;
 By toil and famine worn to skin and bone,
 Lies, senseless of each tugging bitch's son.

A little upright, pert, tart, tripping wight,
 And still his precious self his dear delight ;
 Who loves his own smart shadow in the streets,
 Better than e'er the fairest she he meets ;
 Much specious lore, but little understood,
 (Veneering oft outshines the solid wood),
 His solid sense, by inches you must tell,
 But mete his cunning by the Scottish ell !
 A man of fashion too, he made his tour,
 Learn'd "vive la bagatelle et vive l'amour ;"
 So travell'd monkies their grimace improve,
 Polish their grin—nay, sigh for ladies' love !
 His meddling vanity, a busy fiend,
 Still making work his selfish craft must mend.

Crochallan came,
 The old cock'd hat, the brown surtout—the same ;
 His grisly beard just bristling in its might—
 'Twas four long nights and days from shaving-night ;
 His uncomb'd, hoary locks, wild-staring, thatch'd
 A head, for thought profound and clear, unmatch'd ;
 Yet, tho' his caustic wit was biting-rude,
 His heart was warm, benevolent and good.

O Dulness, portion of the truly blest!
 Calm, shelter'd haven of eternal rest!
 Thy sons ne'er madden in the fierce extremes
 Of Fortune's polar frost, or torrid beams;
 If mantling high she fills the golden cup,
 With sober, selfish ease they sip it up;
 Conscious the bounteous meed they well deserve,
 They only wonder "some folks" do not starve!
 The grave, sage hern thus easy picks his frog,
 And thinks the mallard a sad worthless dog.
 When disappointment snaps the thread of Hope,
 When, thro' disastrous night, they darkling grope,
 With deaf endurance sluggishly they bear,
 And just conclude that "fools are Fortune's care;"
 So, heavy, passive to the tempest's shocks,
 Strong on the sign-post stands the stupid ox.

Not so the idle Muses' mad-cap train,
 Not such the workings of their moon-struck brain;
 In equanimity they never dwell,
 By turns in soaring heaven, or vaulted hell!

ELEGY ON THE YEAR 1788.

FOR lords or kings I dinna mourn,
 E'en let them die—for that they're born:
 But oh! prodigious to reflect!
 A *Townmont*, sirs, is gane to wreck!
 O *Eighty-eight*, in thy sma' space,
 What dire events hae taken place!
 Of what enjoyments thou hast reft us!
 In what a pickle thou hast left us!

The Spanish empire's tint a head,
 And my auld toothless Bawtie's dead:
 The tulyie's tough 'tween Pitt and Fox,
 And 'tween our Maggie's twa wee cocks;

The tane is game, a bluidy devil,
 But to the hen-birds unco civil ;
 The tither's something dour o' treadin,
 But better stuff ne'er claw'd a midden.

Ye ministers, come mount the poupit,
 An' cry till ye be hoarse an' roupet,
 For *Eighty-eight*, he wished you weel,
 An' gaed ye a' baith gear an meal ;
 E'en mony a plack, and mony a peck,
 Ye ken yoursels, for little feck !

Ye bonie lasses, dight your e'en,
 For some o' you hae tint a frien' ;
 In *Eighty-eight*, ye ken, was taen,
 What ye'll ne'er hae to gie again.

Observe the very nowt an' sheep,
 How dowff an' daviely they creep ;
 Nay, even the yirth itsel does cry,
 For E'nburgh wells are grutten dry.

O *Eighty-nine*, thou's but a bairn,
 An' no owre auld, I hope, to learn !
 Thou beardless boy, I pray tak care,
 Thou now has got thy Daddy's chair ;
 Nae handcuff'd, mizl'd, hap-shackl'd *Regent*,
 But, like himsel, a full free agent,
 Be sure ye follow out the plan
 Nae waur than he did, honest man !
 As muckle better as you can.

January 1, 1789.

THE HENPECKED HUSBAND.

CURS'D be the man, the poorest wretch in life,
 The crouching vassal to a tyrant wife !
 Who has no will but by her high permission ;
 Who has not sixpence but in her possession ;
 Who must to her his dear friend's secrets tell,
 Who dreads a curtain lecture worse than hell.

Were such the wife had fallen to my part,
 I'd break her spirit or I'd break her heart ;
 I'd charm her with the magic of a switch,
 I'd kiss her maids, and kick the perverse b——h.

VERSICLES ON SIGN-POSTS.¹⁵²

HE looked just as your sign-post Lions do,
 With aspect fierce, and quite as harmless too.

So heavy, passive to the tempest's shocks,
 Dull on the sign-post stands the stupid ox.

His face with smile eternal drest,
 Just like the landlord to his guest,
 High as they hang with creaking din,
 To index out the Country Inn.

A head, pure, sinless quite of brain and soul,
 The very image of a barber's Poll ;
 It shows a human face, and wears a wig,
 And looks, when well preserv'd, amazing big.

ROBIN SHURE IN HAIRST.¹⁵³

Chorus.—Robin shure in hairst,
 I shure wi' him ;
 Fient a heuk had I,
 Yet I stack by him.

I GAED up to Dunse,
 To warp a wab o' plaiden,
 At his daddie's yett,
 Wha met me but Robin !
 Robin shure, etc.

Was na Robin bauld,
 Tho' I was a cottar,
 Play'd me sic a trick,
 An' me the Eller's dochter !
 Robin shure, etc.

Robin promis'd me
 A' my winter vittle ;
 Fient haet he had but three
 Guse-feathers and a whittle !
 Robin shure, etc.

ODE, SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF MRS. OSWALD
 OF AUCHENCROIVE.¹⁵⁴

DWELLER in yon dungeon dark,
 Hangman of creation ! mark,
 Who in widow-weeds appears,
 Laden with unhonour'd years.
 Noosing with care a bursting purse,
 Baited with many a deadly curse !

STROPHE.

View the wither'd Beldam's face ;
 Can thy keen inspection trace
 Aught of Humanity's sweet, melting grace ?
 Note that eye, 'tis rheum o'erflows ;
 Pity's flood *there* never rose,
 See these hands, ne'er stretch'd to save,
 Hands that took, but never gave :
 Keeper of Mammon's iron chest,
 Lo, there she goes, unpitied and unblest,
 She goes, but not to realms of everlasting rest !

ANTISTROPHE.

Plunderer of Armies ! lift thine eyes
 (A while forbear, ye torturing fiends) ;
 Seest thou whose step, unwilling, hither bends ?
 No fallen angel, hurl'd from upper skies ;
 'Tis thy trusty quondam Mate,
 Doom'd to share thy fiery fate ;
 She, tardy, hell-ward plies.

EPODE.

And are they of no more avail,
 Ten thousand glittering pounds a year?
 In other worlds can Mammon fail,
 Omnipotent as he is here?
 O, bitter mockery of the pompous bier,
 While down the wretched Vital Part is driven!
 The cave-lodg'd Beggar, with a conscience clear,
 Expires in rags, unknown, and goes to Heaven.

PEGASUS AT WANLOCKHEAD.

WITH Pegasus upon a day,
 Apollo weary flying,
 Through frosty hills the journey lay,
 On foot the way was plying.

Poor slipshod giddy Pegasus
 Was but a sorry walker;
 To Vulcan then Apollo goes,
 To get a frosty caulker.

Obliging Vulcan fell to work,
 Threw by his coat and bonnet,
 And did Sol's business in a crack;
 Sol paid him with a sonnet.

Ye Vulcan's sons of Wanlockhead,
 Pity my sad disaster;
 My Pegasus is poorly shod,
 I'll pay you like my master.

To JOHN TAYLOR, *Ramage's, 3 o'clock.*

SAPPHO REDIVIVA—A FRAGMENT.¹⁵⁵

By all I lov'd, neglected and forgot,
 No friendly face e'er lights my squalid cot;
 Shunn'd, hated, wrong'd, unpitied, unredrest,
 The mock'd quotation of the scorner's jest!

In vain would Prudence, with decorous sneer,
Point out a censuring world, and bid me fear ;
Above the world, on wings of Love, I rise—
I know its worst, and can that worst despise :
Let Prudence' direst bodements on me fall,
M y, rich reward, o'erpays them all!

Mild zephyrs waft thee to life's farthest shore,
Nor think of me and my distresses more,—
Falsehood accurst! No! still I beg a place,
Still near thy heart some little, little trace ;
For that dear trace the world I would resign :
O let me live, and die, and think it mine!

" I burn, I burn, as when thro' ripen'd corn
By driving winds the crackling flames are borne ;"
Now raving-wild, I curse that fatal night,
Then bless the hour that charm'd my guilty sight :
In vain the laws their feeble force oppose,
Chain'd at Love's feet, they groan, his vanquish'd foes :

In vain Religion meets my shrinking eye,
I dare not combat, but I turn and fly :
Conscience in vain upbraids th' unhallow'd fire,
Love grasps her scorpions—stifled they expire !
Reason drops headlong from his sacred throne,
Your dear idea reigns, and reigns alone ;
Each thought intoxicated homage yields,
And riots wanton in forbidden fields.
By all on high adoring mortals know!
By all the conscious villain fears below!
By your dear self!—the last great oath I swear,
Not life, nor soul, were ever half so dear!

SHE'S FAIR AND FAUSE.¹⁵⁶

SHE's fair and fause that causes my smart,
I lo'ed her meikle and lang ;
She's broken her vow, she's broken my heart,
And I may e'en gae hang.

A coof cam in wi' routh o' gear,
 And I hae tint my dearest dear ;
 But woman is but warld's gear,
 Sae let the bonie lass gang.

Whae'er ye be that woman love,
 To this be never blind ;
 Nae ferlie 'tis tho' fickle she prove,
 A woman has't by kind.
 O woman lovely, woman fair!
 An angel form's faun to thy share,
 'Twad been o'er meikle to gien thee mair—
 I mean an angel mind.

EPITAPH ON ROBERT MUIR.

WHAT man could esteem, or what woman could love,
 Was he who lies under this sod :
 If such Thou refusest admission above,
 Then whom wilt Thou favour, Good God ?

LINES TO CAPTAIN RIDDELL

ON RETURNING A NEWSPAPER.

YOUR News and Review, sir,
 I've read through and through, sir,
 With little admiring or blaming ;
 The Papers are barren
 Of home-news or foreign,
 No murders or rapes worth the naming.

Our friends, the Reviewers,
 Those chippers and hewers,
 Are judges of mortar and stone, sir ;
 But of *meet* or *unmeet*,
 In a fabric complete,
 I'll boldly pronounce they are none, sir.

My goose-quill too rude is
 To tell all your goodness
 Bestow'd on your servant, the Poet ;
 Would to God I had one
 Like a beam of the sun,
 And then all the world, sir, should know it !
 ELLISLAND, *Monday morning.*

TO JOHN M'MURDO, ESQ., OF DRUMLANRIG.

SENT WITH SOME OF THE AUTHOR'S POEMS.

O COULD I give thee India's wealth,
 As I this trifle send ;
 Because thy joy in both would be
 To share them with a friend.
 But golden sands did never grace
 The Heliconian stream ;
 Then take what gold could never buy—
 An honest bard's esteem.

RHYMING REPLY TO A NOTE FROM CAPTAIN
 RIDDELL.

DEAR SIR, at any time or tide,
 I'd rather sit wi' you than ride,
 Though 'twere wi' royal Geordie :
 And trowth, your kindness, soon and late,
 Aft gars me to mysel look blate—
 The Lord in Heav'n reward ye !

ELLISLAND.

R. BURNS.

TO MISS CRUICKSHANK.

A VERY YOUNG LADY.

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A BOOK, PRESENTED
 TO HER BY THE AUTHOR.

BEAUTEOUS Rosebud, young and gay,
 Blooming on thy early May,

Never may'st thou, lovely flower,
 Chilly shrink in sleety shower!
 Never Boreas' hoary path,
 Never Eurus' pois'nous breath,
 Never baleful stellar lights,
 Taint thee with untimely blights!
 Never, never reptile thief
 Riot on thy virgin leaf!
 Nor even Sol too fiercely view
 Thy bosom blushing still with dew!

May'st thou long, sweet crimson gem,
 Richly deck thy native stem;
 Till some ev'ning, sober, calm,
 Dropping dews, and breathing balm,
 While all around the woodland rings,
 And ev'ry bird thy requiem sings;
 Thou, amid the dirgeful sound,
 Shed thy dying honours round,
 And resign to parent Earth
 The loveliest form she e'er gave birth.

BEWARE O' BONIE ANN.¹⁵⁷

YE gallants bright, I rede you right,
 Beware o' bonie Ann;
 Her comely face sae fu' o' grace,
 Your heart she will trepan:
 Her een sae bright, like stars by night,
 Her skin is like the swan;
 Sae jimply lac'd, her genty waist,
 That sweetly ye might span.

Youth, Grace, and Love attendant move,
 And Pleasure leads the van:
 In a' their charms, and conquering arms,
 They wait on bonie Ann.

The captive bands may chain the hands,
 But love enslaves the man :
 Ye gallants braw, I rede you a',
 Beware o' bonie Ann!

ODE ON THE DEPARTED REGENCY BILL.

DAUGHTER of Chaos' doting years,
 Nurse of ten thousand hopes and fears
 Whether thy airy, unsubstantial shade
 (The rights of sepulture now duly paid)
 Spread abroad its hideous form
 On the roaring civil storm,
 Deafening din and warring rage
 Factions wild with factions wage ;
 Or under-ground, deep-sunk, profound,
 Among the demons of the earth,
 With groans that make the mountains shake,
 Thou mourn thy ill-starr'd, blighted birth ;
 Or in the uncreated Void,
 Where seeds of future being fight,
 With lessen'd step thou wander wide,
 To greet thy Mother—Ancient Night,
 And as each jarring, monster-mass is past,
 Fond recollect what once thou wast :
 In manner due, beneath this sacred oak,
 Hear, Spirit, hear ! thy presence I invoke !
 By a Monarch's heaven-struck fate,
 By a disunited State,
 By a generous Prince's wrongs,
 By a Senate's strife of tongues,
 By a Premier's sullen pride,
 Louring on the changing tide ;
 By dread Thurlow's powers to awe—
 Rhetoric, blasphemy and law ;
 By the turbulent ocean—
 A Nation's commotion,
 By the harlot-caresses
 Of borough addresses,

By days few and evil
 (Thy portion, poor devil!)
 By Power, Wealth, and Show,
 (Ye gods by men adored),
 By nameless Poverty,
 (Their hell abhorred),
 By all they hope, by all they fear,
 Hear! and appear!

Stare not on me, thou ghastly Power!
 Nor, grim with chained defiance, lour:
 No Babel-structure would I build
 Where, order exil'd from his native sway,
 Confusion may the REGENT-sceptre wield,
 While all would rule and none obey:
 Go, to the world of Man relate
 The story of thy sad, eventful fate;
 And call presumptuous Hope to hear
 And bid him check his blind career;
 And tell the sore-prest sons of Care,
 Never, never to despair!
 Paint Charles's speed on wings of fire,
 The object of his fond desire,
 Beyond his boldest hopes, at hand:
 Paint all the triumph of the Portland Band;
 Mark how they lift the joy-exulting voice,
 And how their num'rous creditors rejoice;
 But just as hopes to warm enjoyment rise,
 Cry CONVALESCENCE! and the vision flies.

Then next pourtray a dark'ning twilight gloom,
 Eclipsing sad a gay, rejoicing morn,
 While proud Ambition to th' untimely tomb
 By gnashing, grim, despairing fiends is borne:
 Paint ruin, in the shape of high D[undas]
 Gaping with giddy terror o'er the brow;
 In vain he struggles, the fates behind him press,
 And clam'rous hell yawns for her prey below:

How fallen *That*, whose pride late scaled the skies!
 And *This*, like Lucifer, no more to rise!
 Again pronounce the powerful word;
 See Day, triumphant from the Night, restored.

Then know this truth, ye Sons of Men!
 (Thus ends thy moral tale),
 Your darkest terrors may be vain,
 Your brightest hopes may fail.

EPISTLE TO JAMES TENNANT OF GLENCONNER.¹⁵⁸

AULD comrade dear, and brither sinner,
 How's a' the folk about Glenconner?
 How do you this blae eastlin wind,
 That's like to blaw a body blind?
 For me, my faculties are frozen,
 My dearest member nearly dozen'd.
 I've sent you here, by Johnie Simson,
 Twa sage philosophers to glimpse on;
 Smith, wi' his sympathetic feeling,
 An' Reid, to common sense appealing.
 Philosophers have fought and wrangled,
 An' meikle Greek an' Latin mangled,
 Till wi' their logic-jargon tir'd,
 And in the depth of science mir'd,
 To common sense they now appeal,
 What wives and wabsters see and feel.
 But, hark ye, friend! I charge you strictly,
 Peruse them, an' return them quickly:
 For now I'm grown sae cursed douce
 I pray and ponder butt the house;
 My shins, my lane, I there sit roastin,
 Perusing Bunyan, Brown an' Boston,
 Till, by an' by, if I haud on,
 I'll grunt a reàl gospel groan:
 Already I begin to try it,
 To cast my e'en up like a pyet,

When by the gun she tumbles o'er
Flutt'ring an' gasping in her gore :
Sae shortly you shall see me bright,
A burning an' a shining light.

My heart-warm love to guid auld Glen,
The ace an' wale of honest men :
When bending down wi' auld grey hairs
Beneath the load of years and cares,
May He who made him still support him,
An' views beyond the grave comfort him ;
His worthy fam'ly far and near,
God bless them a' wi' grace and gear !

My auld schoolfellow, preacher Willie,
The manly tar, my mason-billie,
And Auchenbay, I wish him joy ,
If he's a parent, lass or boy,
May he be *dad*, and Meg the *mither*,
Just five-and-forty years thegither !
And no forgetting wabster Charlie,
I'm tauld he offers very fairly.
An', Lord, remember singing Sannock,
Wi' hale breeks, saxpence, an' a bannock !
And next, my auld acquaintance, Nancy,
Since she is fitted to her fancy,
An' her kind stars hae airted till her
A guid chiel wi' a pickle siller.
My kindest, best respects, I sen' it,
To cousin Kate, an' sister Janet :
Tell them, frae me, wi' chiels be cautious,
For, faith, they'll aiblins fin' them fashious ;
To grant a heart is fairly civil,
But to grant a maidenhead's the devil.
An' lastly, Jamie, for yoursel,
May guardian angels tak a spell,
An' steer you seven miles south o' hell :

But first, before you see heaven's glory,
 May ye get mony a merry story,
 Mony a laugh, and mony a drink,
 And ay eneugh o' needfu' clink.

Now fare ye weel, an' joy be wi' you :
 For my sake, this I beg it o' you,
 Assist poor Simson a' ye can,
 Ye'll fin' him just an honest man ;
 Sae I conclude, and quat my chanter,
 Yours, saint or sinner,

ROB THE RANTER.

A NEW PSALM FOR THE CHAPEL OF
 KILMARNOCK.¹⁵⁹

ON THE THANKSGIVING-DAY FOR HIS MAJESTY'S RECOVERY.

O SING a new song to the Lord,
 Make, all and every one,
 A joyful noise, even for the king
 His restoration.

The sons of Belial in the land
 Did set their heads together ;
 Come, let us sweep them off, said they,
 Like an o'erflowing river.

They set their heads together, I say,
 They set their heads together ;
 On right, on left, on every hand,
 We saw none to deliver.

Thou madest strong two chosen ones,
 To quell the Wicked's pride ;
 That Young Man, great in Issachar,
 The burden-bearing tribe.

And him, among the Princes, chief
 In our Jerusalem,
 The judge that's mighty in thy law,
 The man that fears thy name.

Yet they, even they, with all their strength,
Began to faint and fail ;
Even as two howling, ravenous wolves
To dogs do turn their tail.

Th' ungodly o'er the just prevail'd,
For so Thou hadst appointed ;
That Thou might'st greater glory give
Unto Thine own anointed.

And now Thou hast restored our State,
Pity our Kirk also ;
For she by tribulations
Is now brought very low.

Consume that high-place Patronage,
From off Thy holy hill ;
And in Thy fury burn the book—
Even of that man M'Gill

Now hear our prayer, accept our song,
And fight Thy chosen's battle :
We seek but little, Lord, from Thee ;
Thou kens we get as little.

SKETCH IN VERSE.

INSCRIBED TO THE RIGHT HON. C. J. FOX.

How Wisdom and Folly meet, mix, and unite,
How Virtue and Vice blend their black and their white,
How Genius, th' illustrious father of fiction,
Confounds rule and law, reconciles contradiction—
I sing : If these mortals, the critics, should bustle,
I care not, not I—let the critics go whistle.

But now for a Patron, whose name and whose glory,
At once may illustrate and honor my story.

Thou first of our orators, first of our wits ;
Yet whose parts and acquirements seem just lucky hits ;

With knowledge so vast, and with judgment so strong,
 No man, with the half of 'em e'er could go wrong ;
 With passions so potent, and fancies so bright,
 No man with the half of 'em e'er could go right ;
 A sorry, poor, misbegot son of the Muses,
 For using thy name offers fifty excuses.

Good L—d, what is Man ! for as simple he looks,
 Do but try to develop his hooks and his crooks ;
 With his depths and his shallows, his good and his evil,
 All in all, he's a problem must puzzle the devil.

On his one ruling passion Sir Pope hugely labors,
 That, like th' old Hebrew walking-switch, eats up its neigh-
 bours :
 Mankind are his show-box—a friend, would you know him ?
 Pull the string, Ruling Passion the picture will show him.
 What pity, in rearing so beauteous a system,
 One trifling particular, *Truth*, should have miss'd him ;
 For, spite of his fine theoretic positions,
 Mankind is a science defies definitions.

Some sort all our qualities each to its tribe,
 And think human nature they truly describe ;
 Have you found this, or t'other ? There's more in the wind ;
 As by one drunken fellow his comrades you'll find.
 But such is the flaw, or the depth of the plan,
 In the make of that wonderful creature called Man ;
 No two virtues, whatever relation they claim,
 Nor even two different shades of the same.
 Though like as was ever twin brother to brother,
 Possessing the one shall imply you've the other.

But truce with abstraction, and truth with a Muse
 Whose rhymes you'll perhaps, Sir, ne'er deign to peruse :
 Will you leave your justings, your jars, and your quarrels,
 Contending with Billy for proud-nodding laurels ?
 My much-honor'd Patron, believe your poor poet,
 Your courage, much more than your prudence, you show it :

In vain with Squire Billy for laurels you struggle ;
He'll have them by fair trade, if not, he will smuggle :
Not cabinets even of kings would conceal 'em,
He'd up the back-stairs, and by G—— he would steal 'em !
Then feats like Squire Billy's you ne'er can achieve 'em ;
It is not, out-do him—the task is, out-thieve him !

THE WOUNDED HARE.¹⁶⁰

INHUMAN man ! curse on thy barb'rous art,
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye ;
May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
Nor never pleasure glad thy cruel heart !

Go live, poor wand'rer of the wood and field !
The bitter little that of life remains :
No more the thickening brakes and verdant plains
To thee a home, or food, or pastime yield

Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wonted rest,
No more of rest, but now thy dying bed !
The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,
The cold earth with thy bloody bosom prest.

Perhaps a mother's anguish adds its woe ;
The playful pair crowd fondly by thy side ;
Ah ! helpless nurslings, who will now provide
That life a mother only can bestow !

Oft as by winding Nith I, musing, wait
The sober eve, or hail the cheerful dawn,
I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
And curse the ruffian's arm, and mourn thy hapless fate.

DELIA—AN ODE.¹⁶¹

FAIR the face of orient day,
Fair the tints of op'ning rose ;
But fairer still my Delia dawns,
More lovely far her beauty shows.

Sweet the lark's wild warbled lay,
 Sweet the tinkling rill to hear ;
 But, Delia, more delightful still,
 Steal thine accents on mine ear,

The flower-enamour'd, busy bee
 The rosy banquet loves to sip ;
 Sweet the streamlet's limpid laps
 To the sun-brown'd Arab's lip.

But, Delia, on thy balmy lips
 Let me, no vagrant insect, rove ;
 O let me steal one liquid kiss,
 For, oh ! my soul is parch'd with love.

THE GARD'NER WI' HIS PAIDLE.

Tune—"The Gardener's March."

WHEN rosy May comes in wi' flowers,
 To deck her gay, green-spreading bowers,
 Then busy, busy are his hours,
 The Gard'ner wi' his paidle.

The crystal waters gently fa',
 The merry birds are lovers a',
 The scented breezes round him blaw—
 The Gard'ner wi' his paidle.

When purple morning starts the hare
 To steal upon her early fare ;
 Then thro' the dew he maun repair—
 The Gard'ner wi' his paidle.

When day, expiring in the west,
 The curtain draws o' Nature's rest,
 He flies to her arms he lo'es best,
 The Gard'ner wi' his paidle.

ON A BANK OF FLOWERS.¹⁶²

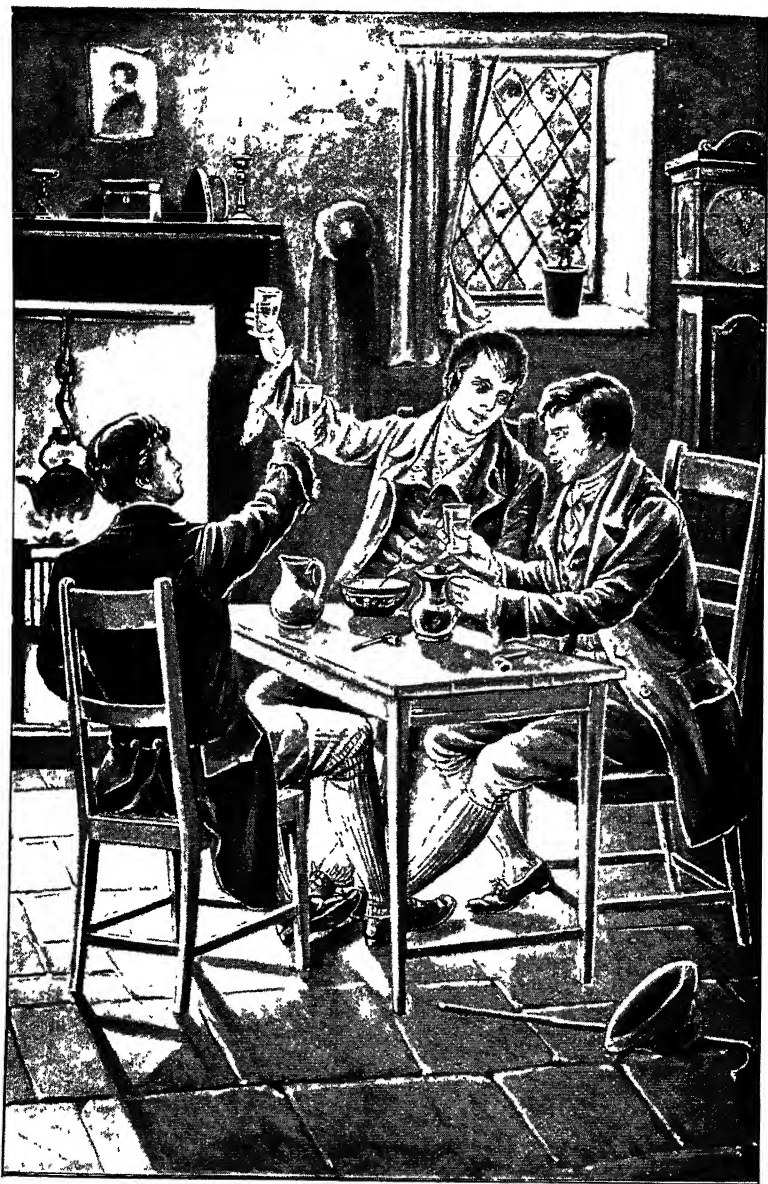
ON a bank of flowers in a summer day,
For summer lightly drest,
The youthful, blooming Nelly lay,
With love and sleep oppress ;
When Willie, wand'ring thro' the wood,
Who for her favour oft had sued ;
 He gaz'd, he wish'd,
 He fear'd, he blush'd,
And trembled where he stood.
Her closèd eyes, like weapons sheath'd,
 Were seal'd in soft repose ;
Her lips, still as she fragrant breath'd,
 It richer dyed the rose ;
The springing lilies, sweetly prest,
Wild-wanton kiss'd her rival breast ;
 He gaz'd, he wish'd,
 He fear'd, he blush'd,
His bosom ill at rest
Her robes light-waving in the breeze,
 Her tender limbs embrace ;
Her lovely form, her native ease,
 All harmony and grace ;
Tumultuous tides his pulses roll,
A faltering, ardent kiss he stole ;
 He gaz'd, he wish'd,
 He fear'd, he blush'd,
And sigh'd his very soul.
As flies the partridge from the brake,
 On fear-inspired wings,
So Nelly starting, half-awake,
 Away affrighted springs ;
But Willie, follow'd—as he should,
He overtook her in the wood ;
 He vow'd, he pray'd,
 He found the maid
Forgiving all and good.

YOUNG JOCKIE WAS THE BLYTHEST LAD.

YOUNG Jockie was the blythest lad,
In a' our town or here awa' ;
Fu' blythe he whistled at the gaud,
Fu' lightly danc'd he in the ha' :
He roos'd my een sae bonie blue,
He roos'd my waist sae genty sma' ;
An' ay my heart cam to my mou',
When ne'er a body heard or saw.
My Jockie toils upon the plain,
Thro' wind and weet, thro' frost and snaw ;
And o'er the lea I leuk fu' fain,
When Jockie's owsen hameward ca'.
An' ay the night comes round again,
When in his arms he taks me a' ;
An' ay he vows he'll be my ain,
As lang as he has breath to draw.

THE BANKS OF NITH.

THE Thames flows proudly to the sea,
Where royal cities stately stand ;
But sweeter flows the Nith to me,
Where Comyns ance had high command.
When shall I see that honor'd land,
That winding stream I love so dear !
Must wayward Fortune's adverse hand
For ever, ever keep me here ?
How lovely, Nith, thy fruitful vales,
Where bounding hawthorns gayly bloom ;
And sweetly spread thy sloping dales,
Where lambkins wanton through the broom.
Tho' wandering now must be my doom,
Far from thy bonie banks and braes,
May there my latest hours consume,
Amang the friends of early days !



BU.

"We are na fou, we're nae that fou,
But just a drappie in our e'e."

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X

JAMIE, COME TRY ME

Chorus.—Jamie, come try me,
 Jamie, come try me,
 If thou would win my love,
 Jamie, come try me,

IF thou should ask my love,
 Could I deny thee ?
 If thou would win my love,
 Jamie, come try me !
 Jamie, come try me, etc.

If thou should kiss me, love,
 Wha could espy thee ?
 If thou wad be my love,
 Jamie, come try me !
 Jamie, come try me, etc.

I LOVE MY LOVE IN SECRET.

My Sandy gied to me a ring,
 Was a' beset wi' diamonds fine ;
 But I gied him a far better thing,
 I gied my heart in pledge o' his ring.

Chorus.—My Sandy O, my Sandy O,
 My bonie, bonie Sandy O ;
 Tho' the love that I owe
 To thee I dare na show,
 Yet I love my love in secret, my Sandy, O.

My Sandy brak a piece o' gowd,
 While down his cheeks the saut tears row'd ;
 He took a hauf, and gied it to me,
 And I'll keep it till the hour I die.
 My Sandy O, etc.

SWEET TIBBIE DUNBAR.

O WILT thou go wi' me, sweet Tibbie Dunbar?
 O wilt thou go wi' me, sweet Tibbie Dunbar?
 Wilt thou ride on a horse, or be drawn in a car,
 Or walk by my side, O sweet Tibbie Dunbar?

I care na thy daddie, his lands and his money,
 I care na thy kin, sae high and sae lordly;
 But sae that thou'lt hae me for better or waur,
 And come in thy coatie, sweet Tibbie Dunbar.

THE CAPTAIN'S LADY.¹⁶³

Chorus.—O mount and go, mount and make ye ready,
 O mount and go, and be the Captain's lady.

WHEN the drums do beat, and the cannons rattle,
 Thou shalt sit in state, and see thy love in battle:
 When the drums do beat, and the cannons rattle,
 Thou shalt sit in state, and see thy love in battle.
 O mount and go, etc.

When the vanquish'd foe sues for peace and quiet,
 To the shades we'll go, and in love enjoy it:
 When the vanquish'd foe sues for peace and quiet,
 To the shades we'll go, and in love enjoy it.
 O mount and go, etc.

JOHN ANDERSON, MY JO.¹⁶⁴

JOHN Anderson, my jo, John,
 When we were first acquent;
 Your locks were like the raven,
 Your bonie brow was brent;
 But now your brow is beld, John,
 Your locks are like the snaw;
 But blessings on your frosty pow,
 John Anderson, my jo.



BU

"Mony a cantie day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither."

John Anderson, my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither ;
And mony a cantie day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither :
Now we maun totter down, John,
And hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson, my jo.

MY LOVE, SHE'S BUT A LASSIE YET.¹⁶⁵

My love, she's but a lassie yet,
My love, she's but a lassie yet ;
We'll let her stand a year or twa,
She'll no be hauf sae saucy yet ;
I rue the day I sought her, O !
I rue the day I sought her, O !
Wha gets her need na say he's woo'd,
But he may say he has bought her, O.
Come, draw a drap o' the best o't yet ;
Come, draw a drap o' the best o't yet ;
Gae seek for pleasure whar you will,
But here I never miss'd it yet,
We're a' dry wi' drinkin' o't ;
We're a' dry wi' drinkin' o't ;
The minister kiss't the fiddler's wife ;
He could na preach for thinkin' o't.

TAM GLEN.¹⁶⁶

My heart is a-breaking, dear Tittie,
Some counsel unto me come len',
To anger them a' is a pity,
But what will I do wi' Tam Glen ?
I'm thinking, wi' sic a braw fellow,
In poortith I might mak a fen' ;
What care I in riches to wallow,
If I manna marry Tam Glen ?

There's Lowrie the Laird o' Dumeller—
 "Gude day to you"—brute! he comes ben :
 He brags and he blaws o' his siller,
 But when will he dance like Tam Glen ?

My minnie does constantly deave me,
 And bids me beware o' young men ;
 They flatter, she says, to deceive me,
 But wha can think sae o' Tam Glen ?

My daddie says, gin I'll forsake him,
 He'd gie me gude hunder marks ten ;
 But, if it's ordain'd I maun take him,
 O wha will I get but Tam Glen ?

Yestreen at the Valentine's dealing,
 My heart to my mou gied a sten ;
 For thrice I drew ane without failing,
 And thrice it was written " Tam Glen ! "

The last Halloween I was waukin
 My droukit sark-sleeve, as ye ken,
 His likeness came up the house staukin,
 And the very grey brèeks o' Tam Glen !

Come, counsel, dear Tittie, don't tarry ;
 I'll gie ye my bonie black hen,
 Gif ye will advise me to marry
 The lad I lo'e dearly, Tam Glen.

CARLE, AN THE KING COME.¹⁶⁷

Chorus.—Carle, an the King come,
 Carle, an the King come,
 Thou shalt dance and I will sing,
 Carle, an the King come,

AN somebody were come again,
 Then somebody maun cross the main,
 And every man shall hae his ain,
 Carle, an the King come.
 Carle, an the King come, etc.

I trow we swappet for the worse,
 We gae the boot and better horse ;
 An that we'll tell them at the cross,
 Carle, an the King come.
 Carle, an the King come, etc.

Coggie, an the King come,
 Coggie, an the King come,
 I'se be fou, an' thou'se be toom,
 Coggie, an the King come.
 Coggie, an the King come, etc.

THE LADDIE'S DEAR SEL'.

THERE's a youth in this city, it were a great pity
 That he from our lasses should wander awa' ;
 For he's bonie and braw, weel-favor'd witha',
 An' his hair has a natural buckle an' a'.

His coat is the hue o' his bonnet sae blue,
 His fecket is white as the new-driven snaw ,
 His hose they are blae, and his shoon like the slae,
 And his clear siller buckles, they dazzle us a'.

For beauty and fortune the laddie's been courtin ;
 Weel-featur'd, weel-tocher'd, weel-mounted an' braw;
 But chiefly the siller that gars him gang till her,
 The penny's the jewel that beautifies a'.

There's Meg wi' the mailen that fain wad a haen him,
 And Susie, wha's daddie was laird o' the Ha' ;
 There's lang-tocher'd Nancy maist fetters his fancy,
 But the laddie's dear sel', he loes dearest of a'.

WHISTLE O'ER THE LAVE O'T.¹⁶⁸

FIRST when Maggie was my care,
 Heav'n, I thought, was in her air,
 Now we're married—speir nae mair,
 But whistle o'er the lave o't!

Meg was meek, and Meg was mild,
 Sweet and harmless as a child—
 Wiser men than me's beguil'd ;
 Whistle o'er the lave o't !

How we live, my Meg and me,
 How we love, and how we gree,
 I care na by how few may see—
 Whistle o'er the lave o't !

Wha I wish were maggot's meat,
 Dish'd up in her winding-sheet,
 I could write—but Meg may see't—
 Whistle o'er the lave o't !

MY EPPIE ADAIR.

Chorus.—An' O my Eppie, my jewel, my Eppie,
 Wha wad na be happy wi' Eppie Adair ?

By love and by beauty, by law and by duty,
 I swear to be true to my Eppie Adair !
 By love and by beauty, by law and by duty,
 I swear to be true to my Eppie Adair !
 And O my Eppie, etc.

A' pleasure exile me, dishonor defile me,
 If e'er I beguile ye, my Eppie Adair !
 A' pleasure exile me, dishonor defile me,
 If e'er I beguile thee, my Eppie Adair !
 And O my Eppie, etc.

ON THE LATE CAPTAIN GROSE'S PEREGRINATIONS THROUGH SCOTLAND,¹⁶⁹

COLLECTING THE ANTIQUITIES OF THAT KINGDOM.

HEAR, Land o' Cakes, and brither Scots,
 Frae Maidenkirke to Johnie Groat's ;—
 If there's a hole in a' your coats,
 I rede you tent it :
 A chield's amang you takin notes,
 And faith he'll prent it :

If in your bounds ye chance to light
 Upon a fine, fat, fodge wight,
 O' stature short, but genius bright,
 That's he, mark weel;
 And wow! he has an unco sleight
 O' cauk and keel.

By some auld, houlet-haunted biggin,
 Or kirk deserted by its riggin,
 It's ten to ane ye'll find him snug in
 Some eldritch part,
 Wi' deils, they say, L——d save's! colleaguin
 At some black art.

Ilk ghaist that haunts auld ha' or chaumer,
 Ye gipsy-gang that deal in glamour,
 And you, deep-read in hell's black grammar,
 Warlocks and witches,
 Ye'll quake at his conjuring hammer,
 Ye midnight bitches.

It's tauld he was a sodger bred,
 And ane wad rather fa'n than fled;
 But now he's quat the spurtle-blade,
 And dog-skin wallet,
 And taen the—Antiquarian trade,
 I think they call it.

He has a fouth o' auld nick-nackets:
 Rusty airn caps and junglin jackets,
 Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets,
 A towmont gude;
 And parritch-pats and auld saut-backets,
 Before the Flood.

Of Eve's first fire he has a cinder;
 Auld Tubalcain's fire-shool and fender;
 That which distinguished the gender
 O' Balaam's ass:
 A broomstick o' the witch of Endor,
 Weel shod wi' brass,

POEMS AND SONGS.

Forbye, he'll shape you aff fu' gleg
 The cut of Adam's philibeg;
 The knife that nicket Abel's craig
 He'll prove you fully,
 It was a faulding jocteleg,
 Or lang-kail gullie.

But wad ye see him in his glee,
 For meikle glee and fun has he,
 Then set him down, and twa or three
 Gude fellows wi' him:
 And *port*, O *port*! shine thou a wee,
 And then ye'll see him!

Now, by the pow'rs o' verse and prose!
 Thou art a dainty chield, O Grose!—
 Whae'er o' thee shall ill suppose,
 They sair misca' thee;
 I'd take the rascal by the nose,
 Wad say, "Shame fa' thee."

EPIGRAM ON FRANCIS GROSE THE ANTIQUARY.

THE Devil got notice that Grose was a-dying,
 So whip! at the summons, old Satan came flying;
 But when he approach'd where poor Francis lay moaning,
 And saw each bed-post with its burthen a-groaning,
 Astonish'd, confounded, cries Satan—"By G—,
 I'll want him ere take such a damnable load!"

THE KIRK'S ALARM.¹⁷⁰

Tune—"Come rouse, Brother Sportsmen!"

ORTHODOX! orthodox, who believe in John Knox,
 Let me sound an alarm to your conscience:
 A heretic blast has been blown in the West,
 That "what is no sense must be nonsense,"
 Orthodox! That "what is no sense must be nonsense."

Doctor Mac! Doctor Mac, you should streek on a rack,
 To strike evil-doers wi' terror:
 To join Faith and Sense, upon any pretence,
 Was heretic, damnable error,
 Doctor Mac!^a 'Twas heretic, damnable error.

Town of Ayr! town of Ayr, it was rash, I declare,
 To meddle wi' mischief a-brewing,^b
 Provost John^c is still deaf to the Church's relief,
 And Orator Bob^d is its ruin,
 Town of Ayr! Yes, Orator Bob is its ruin.

D'rymple mild! D'rymple mild, tho' your heart's like a child's,
 And your life like the new-driven snaw,
 Yet that winna save you, auld Satan must have you,
 For preaching that three's ane an' twa.
 D'rymple mild!^e For preaching that three's ane an' twa.

Calvin's sons! Calvin's sons, seize your spiritual guns,
 Ammunition you never can need;
 Your hearts are the stuff will be powder enough,
 And your skulls are a storehouse o' lead,
 Calvin's sons! Your skulls are a storehouse o' lead.

Rumble John! rumble John, mount the steps with a groan,
 Cry, "The Book is with heresy cramm'd;"
 Then out wi' your ladle, deal brimstone like aidle,
 And roar ev'ry note of the D—'d,
 Rumble John!^f And roar ev'ry note of the D—'d.

Simper James! simper James, leave your fair Killie dames,
 There's a holier chase in your view:
 I'll lay on your head, that the pack you'll soon lead,
 For puppies like you there's but few,
 Simper James!^g For puppies like you there's but few.

Singet Sawnie! singet Sawnie, are ye hurdin the penny,
 Unconscious what danger awaits?
 With a jump, yell, and howl, alarm ev'ry soul,
 For Hannibal's just at your gates,
 Singet Sawnie!^h For Hannibal's just at your gates.

Poet Wille! poet Willie, gie the Doctor a volley,
 Wi' your "Liberty's Chain" and your wit;
 O'er Pegasus' side ye ne'er laird a stride,
 Ye but smelt, man, the place where he sh-t,
 Poet Willie!^s Ye but smelt, man, the place where he sh-t.

Barr Steenie! Barr Steenie, what mean ye? what mean ye?
 If ye meddle nae mair wi' the matter,
 Ye may hae some pretence, man, to havins and sense, man,
 Wi' people that ken ye nae better,
 Barr Steenie!^t Wi' people that ken ye nae better.

Jamie Goose! Jamie Goose, ye made but toom roose,
 In hunting the wicked Lieutenant;
 But the Doctor's your mark, for the L—d's holy ark,
 He has cooper'd an' ca'd a wrang pin in't,
 Jamie Goose!^u He has cooper'd an' ca'd a wrang pin in't.

Davie Bluster! Davie Bluster, for a saint if ye muster,
 The core is no nice o' recruits;
 Yet to worth let's be just, royal blood ye might boast,
 If the Ass were the king o' the brutes,
 Davie Bluster!^v If the Ass were the king o' the brutes.

Cessnock-side! Cessnock-side, wi' your turkey-cock pride,
 Of manhood but sma' is your share:
 Ye've the figure, 'tis true, ev'n your foes maun allow,
 And your friends dare na say ye hae mair,
 Cessnock-side!^w And your friends dare na say ye hae mair.

Muirland Jock! muirland Jock, when the L—d makes a rock,
 To crush common-sense for her sins;
 If ill-manners were wit, there's no mortal so fit
 To confound the poor Doctor at ance,
 Muirland Jock!^x To confound the poor Doctor at ance.

Andro Gowk! Andro Gowk, ye may slander the Book,
 An' the Book nought the waur, let me tell ye;
 Tho' ye're rich, an' look big, lay by hat an' wig,
 An' ye'll hae a calf's head o' sma' value,
 Andro Gowk!^y Ye'll hae a calf's head o' sma' value.

Daddy Auld! daddie Auld, there's a tod in the fauld,
 A tod meikle waur than the clerk;
 Tho' ye do little skaith, ye'll be in at the death,
 For gif ye canna bite, ye may bark,
 Daddy Auld! Gif ye canna bite, ye may bark.

Holy Will! holy Will, there was wit in your skull,
 When ye pilfer'd the alms o' the poor;
 The timmer is scant when ye're taen for a saunt,
 Wha should swing in a rape for an hour,
 Holy Will! Ye should swing in a rape for an hour.

Poet Burns! poet Burns, wi' your priest-skelpin turns,
 Why desert ye your auld native shire?
 Your muse is a gipsy, yet were she e'en tipsy,
 She could ca' us nae waur than we are,
 Poet Burns! She could ca' us nae waur than we are.

PRESENTATION STANZAS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Factor John! Factor John, whom the L—d made alone,
 And ne'er made anither, thy peer,
 Thy poor servant, the Bard, in respectful regard,
 He presents thee this token sincere.
 Factor John! He presents thee this token sincere,
 Afton's Laird! Afton's Laird, when your pen can be spared,
 A copy of this I bequeath,
 On the same sicker score as I mention'd before,
 To that trusty auld worthy, Clackleith,
 Afton's Laird! To that trusty auld worthy, Clackleith.

SONNET ON RECEIVING A FAVOUR.

AUG 10, 1789.

Addressed to ROBERT GRAHAM, Esq., of Fintry.

I CALL no Goddess to inspire my strains,
 A fabled Muse may suit a bard that feigns:
 Friend of my life! my ardent spirit burns,
 And all the tribute of my heart returns,

For boons accorded, goodness ever new,
 The gift still dearer, as the giver you.
 Thou orb of day! thou other paler light!
 And all ye many sparkling stars of night!
 If aught that giver from my mind efface,
 If I that giver's bounty e'er disgrace,
 Then roll to me along your wand'ring spheres,
 Only to number out a villain's years!
 I lay my hand upon my swelling breast,
 And grateful would, but cannot speak the rest.

ON BEING APPOINTED TO AN EXCISE DIVISION.

SEARCHING auld wives' barrels,
 Ochon, the day!
 That clarty barm should stain my laurels;
 But—what'll ye say?
 These movin' things ca'd wives an' weans,
 Wad move the very hearts o' stanes!

WILLIE BREW'D A PECK O' MAUT.¹⁷¹

O WILLIE brew'd a peck o' maut,
 And Rob and Allan cam to pree;
 Three blyther hearts, that lee-lang night,
 Ye wad na found in Christendie.

Chorus.—We are na fou, we're nae that fou,
 But just a drappie in our e'e;
 The cock may crawl, the day may daw,
 And ay we'll taste the barley bree.

Here are we met, three merry boys,
 Three merry boys I trow are we;
 And mony a night we've merry been,
 And mony mae we hope to be!
 We are na fou, etc.

It is the moon, I ken her horn,
 That's blinkin' in the lift sae hie;
 She shines sae bright to wyle us hame,
 But, by my sooth, she'll wait a wee!
 We are na fou, etc.

Wha first shall rise to gang awa',
 A cuckold, coward loun is he!
 Wha first beside his chair shall fa',
 He is the King amang us three.
 We are na fou, etc.

CA' THE YOWES TO THE KNOWES.¹⁷²

Chorus—Ca' the yowes to the knowes,
 Ca' them where the heather grows,
 Ca' them where the burnie rowes,
 My bonie dearie.

As I gaed down the water-side,
 There I met my shepherd lad:
 He row'd me sweetly in his plaid,
 An ca'd me his dearie.
 Ca' the yowes, etc.

Will ye gang down the water-side,
 And see the waves sae sweetly glide
 Beneath the hazels spreading wide,
 The moon it shines fu' clearly.
 Ca' the yowes, etc.

Ye sall get gowns and ribbons meet,
 Cauf-leather shoon upon your feet,
 And in my arms thou'lt lie and sleep,
 An' ay sall be my dearie.
 Ca' the yowes, etc.

If ye'll but stand to what ye've said,
 I'se gang wi' thee, my shepherd lad,
 And ye may row me in your plaid,
 And I sall be your dearie.
 Ca' the yowes, etc.

While waters wimple to the sea,
 While day blinks in the lift sae hie,
 Till clay-cauld death sall blin' my e'e,
 Ye sall be my dearie.
 Ca' the yowes, etc.

I GAED A WAEFU' GATE YESTREEN.¹⁷³

I GAED a waefu' gate yestreen,
 A gate I fear I'll dearly rue ;
 I gat my death frae twa sweet een,
 Twa lovely een o' bonie blue.
 'Twas not her golden ringlets bright,
 Her lips, like roses wat wi' dew,
 Her heaving bosom, lily-white—
 It was her een sae bonie blue.

She talk'd, she smil'd, my heart she wyl'd ;
 She charm'd my soul I wist na how ;
 And ay the stound, the deadly wound,
 Cam frae her een sae bonie blue.

But "spare to speak, and spare to speed ;"
 She'll aiblins listen to my vow :
 Should she refuse, I'll lay my dead
 To her twa een sae bonie blue.

HIGHLAND HARRY BACK AGAIN.¹⁷⁴

My Harry was a gallant gay,
 Fu' stately strade he on the plain ;
 But now he's banish'd far away,
 I'll never see him back again.

Chorus.—O for him back again !
 O for him back again !
 I wad gie a' Knockhaspie's land
 For Highland Harry back again.

When a' the lave gae to their bed,
I wander dowie up the glen ;
I set me down and greet my fill,
And ay I wish him back again.
O for him, etc.

O were some villains hangit high,
And ilka body had their ain !
Then I might see the joyfu' sight,
My Highland Harry back again.
O for him, etc.

WHEN FIRST I SAW.¹⁷⁵

Tune—"Maggie Lauder."

Chorus.—She's aye, aye sae blythe, sae gay,
She's aye sae blythe and cheerie ;
She's aye sae bonie, blythe and gay,
O gin I were her dearie !

WHEN first I saw fair Jeanie's face,
I couldna tell what ailed me ;
My heart went fluttering pit-a-pat,
My een they almost failed me.
She's aye sae neat, sae trim, sae tight,
All grace does round her hover,
Ae look deprived me o' my heart,
And I became her lover.

Had I Dundas's whole estate,
Or Hopetoun's wealth to shine in ;
Did warlike laurels crown my brow,
Or humbler bays entwining ;
I'd lay these a' at Jeanie's feet,
Could I but hope to move her,
And prouder than a belted knight,
I'd be my Jeanie's lover.

But sair I fear some happier swain
 Has gained my Jeanie's favour ;
 If so, may every bliss be hers,
 Though I maun never have her.
 But gang she east, or gang she west,
 'Twixt Forth and Tweed all over,
 While men have eyes, or ears, or taste,
 She'll always find a lover.

THE BATTLE OF SHERRAMUIR.¹⁷⁶

Tune—"The Cameron Rant."

"O CAM ye here the fight to shun,
 Or herd the sheep wi' me, man ?
 Or were ye at the Sherra-moor,
 Or did the battle see, man ?"
 I saw the battle, sair and teugh,
 And reekin-red ran mony a sheugh ;
 My heart, for fear, gaed sough for sough,
 To hear the thuds, and see the cluds
 O' clans frae woods, in tartan duds,
 Wha glaum'd at kingdoms three, man.
 La, la, la, la, etc.

The red-coat lads wi' black cockauds,
 To meet them were na slaw, man ;
 They rush'd and push'd, and blude outgush'd,
 And mony a bouk did fa', man :
 The great Argyle led on his files,
 I wat they glanc'd for twenty miles ;
 They hough'd the clans like nine-pin kyles,
 They hack'd and hash'd, while braidwords clash'd,
 And thro' they dash'd, and hew'd and smash'd,
 Till fey men died awa, man.
 La, la, la, la, etc.



But had ye seen the philibegs,
 And skyrin tartan trews, man ;
 When in the teeth they dar'd our Whigs,
 And covenant Trueblues, man :
 In lines extended lang and large,
 When baig'nets overpower'd the targe,
 And thousands hasten'd to the charge ;
 Wi' Highland wrath they frae the sheath
 Drew blades o' death, till, out o' breath,
 They fled like frighted dows, man !
 La, la, la, la, etc.

"O how deil, Tam, can that be true ?
 The chase gaed frae the north, man ;
 I saw mysel, they did pursue
 The horseman back to Forth, man :
 And at Dunblane, in my ain sight,
 They took the brig wi' a' their might,
 And straught to Stirling wing'd their flight :
 But, cursed lot ! the gates were shut ;
 And mony a huntit poor red-coat,
 For fear amaisht did swarf, man !"
 La, la, la, la, etc.

My sister Kate cam up the gate
 Wi' crowdie unto me, man ;
 She swoor she saw some rebels run
 To Perth and to Dundee, man ;
 Their left-hand general had nae skill ;
 The Angus lads had nae good will
 That day their neibors' blude to spill ;
 For fear, by foes, that they should lose
 Their cogs o' brose ; they scar'd at blows,
 And hameward fast did flee, man.
 La, la, la, la, etc.

They've lost some gallant gentlemen,
 Among the Highland clans, man!
 I fear my Lord Panmure is slain,
 Or in his en'mies' hands, man.
 Now wad ye sing this double flight,
 Some fell for wrang, and some for right;
 But mony bade the world gude-night;
 Say, pell and mell, wi' muskets' knell
 How Tories fell, and Whigs to hell
 Flew off in frightened bands, man!
 La, la, la, la, etc.

KILLIECRANKIE.¹⁷⁷

Whare hae ye been sae braw, lad?
 Whare hae ye been sae brankie, O?
 Whare hae ye been sae braw, lad?
 Cam ye by Killiecrankie, O?

Chorus.—An ye had been whare I hae been,
 Ye wad na been sae cantie, O;
 An ye had seen what I hae seen,
 I' the Braes o' Killiecrankie, O.

I faught at land, I faught at sea,
 At hame I faught my Auntie, O;
 But I met the devil an' Dundee,
 On the Braes o' Killiecrankie, O.
 An ye had been, etc.

The bauld Pitcur fell in a furr,
 An' Clavers gat a clankie, O;
 Or I had fed an Athole gled,
 On the Braes o' Killiecrankie, O.
 An ye had been, etc.

AWA', WHIGS, AWA'.

Chorus.—Awa', Whigs, awa'!

Awa', Whigs, awa'!

Ye're but a pack o' traitor louns,

Ye'll do nae gude at a'.

OUR thrissles flourish'd fresh and fair,

And bonie bloom'd our roses ;

But Whigs cam' like a frost in June,

An' wither'd a' our posics.

Awa', Whigs, etc.

Our ancient crown's fa'en in the dust—

Deil blin' them wi' the stoure o't!

An' write their names in his black beuk,

Wha gae the Whigs the power o't!

Awa', Whigs, etc.

Our sad decay in Church and State

Surpasses my describing :

The Whigs cam' o'er us for a curse,

An' we hae done wi' thriving.

Awa', Whigs, etc.

Grim vengeance lang has taen a nap,

But we may see him waukin .

Gude help the day when Royal heads

Are hunted like a maukin!

Awa', Whigs, etc.

A WAUKRIFE MINNIE.¹⁷⁸

WHARE are you gaun, my bonie lass,

Whare are you gaun, my hiney ?

She answered me right saucilie,

An errand for my minnie.

O whare live ye, my bonie lass,
O whare live ye, my hiney?
By yon burnside, gin ye maun ken,
In a wee house wi' my minnie.

But I foor up the glen at e'en,
To see my bonie lassie;
And lang before the grey morn cam,
She was na hauf sae saucie.

O weary fa' the waukrife cock,
And the founmart lay his crawin!
He wauken'd the auld wife frae her sleep,
'A wee blink or the dawin.

An angry wife I wat she raise,
And o'er the bed she brocht her;
And wi' a meikle hazle rung
She made her a weel-pay'd dochtor.

O fare thee weel, my bonie lass,
O fare thee weel, my hiney!
Thou art a gay an' a bonie lass,
But thou hast a waukrife minnie.

AY WAUKIN, O.¹⁷⁹

Chorus.—Ay waukin, O,
Waukin still and weary;
Sleep I can get nane
For thinking on my dearie.

SUMMER'S a pleasant time;
Flowers of ev'ry colour,
The water rins o'er the heugh,
And I long for my true lover.

When I sleep I dream,
When I wauk I'm eerie,
Sleep I can get nane,
For thinking on my dearie.

Lanely night comes on,
A' the lave are sleepin',
I think on my dear lad,
And bleer my een wi' greetin'.

Chorus.—Ay waukin, O,
Waukin still and weary;
Sleep I can get nane
For thinking on my dearie.

FAREWELL TO THE HIGHLANDS.¹⁸⁰

FAREWELL to the Highlands, farewell to the north,
The birthplace of Valour, the country of Worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

Chorus.—My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer;
A-chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

Farewell to the mountains, high-cover'd with snow,
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods,
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.
My heart's in the Highlands, etc.

THE WHISTLE—A BALLAD.¹⁸¹

I SING of a Whistle, a Whistle of worth,
I sing of a Whistle, the pride of the North,
Was brought to the court of our good Scottish King,
And long with this Whistle all Scotland shall ring.

Old Loda,*still rueing the arm of Fingal,
The god of the bottle sends down from his hall—
“This Whistle’s your challenge, to Scotland get o’er,
And drink them to hell, Sir! or ne’er see me more!”

Old poets have sung, and old chronicles tell,
What champions ventur’d, what champions fell :
The son of great Loda was conqueror still,
And blew on the Whistle their requiem shrill.

Till Robert, the lord of the Cairn and the Scaur,
Unmatch’d at the bottle, unconquer’d in war,
He drank his poor god-ship as deep as the sea ;
No tide of the Baltic e’er drunker than he.

Thus Robert, victorious, the trophy has gain’d ;
Which now in his house has for ages remain’d ;
Till three noble chieftains, and all of his blood,
The jovial contest again have renew’d.

Three joyous good fellows, with hearts clear of flaw ;
Craigdarroch, so famous for wit, worth, and law ;
And trusty Glenriddel, so skill’d in old coins ;
And gallant Sir Robert, deep-read in old wines.

Craigdarroch began, with a tongue smooth as oil,
Desiring Glenriddel to yield up the spoil ;
Or else he would muster the heads of the clan,
And once more, in claret, try which was the man.

“By the gods of the ancients!” Glenriddel replies,
“Before I surrender so glorious a prize,
I’ll conjure the ghost of the great Rorie More,
And bumper his horn with him twenty times o’er.”

Sir Robert, a soldier, no speech would pretend,
But he ne’er turn’d his back on his foe, or his friend ;
Said, “Toss down the Whistle, the prize of the field,”
And, knee-deep in claret, he’d die ere he’d yield.

* See Ossian’s “Caric-thura.”—*R. B.*

To the board of Glenriddel our heroes repair,
So noted for drowning of sorrow and care ;
But, for wine and for welcome, not more known to fame,
Than the sense, wit, and taste of a sweet lovely dame.

A Bard was selected to witness the fray,
And tell future ages the feats of the day ;
A Bard who detested all sadness and spleen,
And wish'd that Parnassus a vineyard had been.

The dinner being over, the claret they ply,
And ev'ry new cork is a new spring of joy ;
In the bands of old friendship and kindred so set,
And the bands grew the tighter the more they were wet.

Gay pleasure ran riot as bumpers ran o'er ;
Bright Phœbus ne'er witness'd so joyous a core,
And vow'd that to leave them he was quite forlorn,
Till Cynthia hinted he'd see them next morn.

Six bottles apiece had well wore out the night,
When gallant Sir Robert, to finish the fight,
Turn'd o'er in one bumper a bottle of red,
And swore 'twas the way that their ancestor did.

Then worthy Glenriddel, so cautious and sage,
No longer the warfare ungodly would wage ;
A high Ruling Elder to wallow in wine ;
He left the foul business to folks less divine.

The gallant Sir Robert fought hard to the end ;
But who can with Fate and quart bumpers contend ?
Though Fate said, a hero should perish in light ;
So uprose bright Phœbus—and down fell the knight.

Next uprose our Bard, like a prophet in drink :—
“ Craigdarroch, thou'lt soar when creation shall sink !
But if thou would flourish immortal in rhyme,
Come—one bottle more—and have at the sublime !

"Thy line, that have struggled for freedom with Bruce,
Shall heroes and patriots ever produce :
So thine be the laurel, and mine be the bay ;
The field thou hast won, by yon bright god of day!"

TO MARY IN HEAVEN.¹⁸²

THOU ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,
Thou lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

That sacred hour can I forget?
Can I forget the hallow'd grove,
Where, by the winding Ayr, we met,
To live one day of parting love?
Eternity can not efface
Those records dear of transports past,
Thy image at our last embrace,
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

Ayr, gurgling, kiss'd his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild-woods, thickening green;
The fragrant birch and hawthorn hoar,
'Twin'd amorous round the raptur'd scene:
The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,
The birds sang love on every spray;
Till too, too soon, the glowing west,
Proclaim'd the speed of wing'd day.

Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
And fondly broods with miser-care;
Time but th' impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.

My Mary! dear departed shade!
 Where is thy place of blissful rest?
 See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
 Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

EPISTLE TO DR. BLACKLOCK.¹⁸³

ELLISLAND, 21st Oct., 1789.

Wow, but your letter made me vauntie!
 And are ye hale, and weel, and cantie?
 I ken'd it still, your wee bit jauntie
 Wad bring ye to:
 Lord send you ay as weel's I want ye!
 And then ye'll do.

The ill-thief blaw the Heron south!
 And never drink be near his drouth!
 He tauld mysel by word o' mouth,
 He'd tak my letter;
 I lippen'd to the chiel in trouth,
 And bade nae better.

But aiblins, honest Master Heron
 Had, at the time, some dainty fair one
 To ware his theologic care on,
 And holy study;
 And tired o' sauls to waste his lear on,
 E'en tried the body.

But what d'ye think, my trusty fier,
 I'm turn'd a gauger—Peace be here!
 Parnassian queans, I fear, I fear,
 Ye'll now disdain me!
 And then my fifty pounds a year
 Will little gain me.

Ye glaiket, gleesome, dainty damies,
 Wha, by Castalia's wimplin streamies,
 Lowp, sing, and lave your pretty limbies,
 Ye ken, ye ken,
 That strang necessity supreme is
 'Mang sons o' men.

I hae a wife and twa wee laddies ;
 They maun hae brose and brats o' duddies :
 Ye ken yoursel's my heart right proud is—
 I need na vaunt—
 But I'll sned besoms, thrav saugh woodies,
 Before they want.

Lord help me thro' this warld o' care!
 I'm weary sick o't late and air!
 Not but I hae a richer share
 Than mony ithers ;
 But why should ae man better fare,
 And a' men brithers ?

Come, Firm Resolve, take thou the van,
 Thou stalk o' carl-hemp in man!
 And let us mind, faint heart ne'er wan
 A lady fair :
 Wha does the utmost that he can,
 Will whyles do mair.

But to conclude my silly rhyme
 (I'm scant o' verse and scant o' time),
 To make a happy fireside clime
 To weans and wife,
 That's the true pathos and sublime
 Of human life.

My compliments to sister Beckie,
And eke the same to honest Lucky ;
I wat she is a daintie chuckie,
As e'er tread clay ;
And gratefully, my gude auld cockie,
I'm yours for ay.

ROBERT BURNS.

ADDRESS TO THE TOOTHACHE.

MY curse upon your venom'd stang,
That shoots my tortur'd gums alang,
An' thro' my lug gies sic a twang,
Wi' gnawing vengeance,
Tearing my nerves wi' bitter pang,
Like racking engines!

When fevers burn, or agues freeze us,
Rheumatics gnaw, or colics squeeze us,
Our neibor's sympathy can ease us,
Wi' pitying moan ;
But thee—thou hell o' a' diseases—
They mock our groan.

Adown my beard the slavers trickle,
I throw the wee stools o'er the mickle,
While round the fire the giglets keckle,
To see me loup,
An', raving mad, I wish a heckle
Were in their doup!

In a' the numerous human dools,
Ill-hairsts, daft bargains, cutty stools,
Or worthy frien's rak'd i' the mools,—
Sad sight to see!
The tricks o' knaves, or fash o' fools,
Thou bear'st the gree!

Where'er that place be priests ca' hell,
 Where a' the tones o' misery yell,
 An' rankèt plagues their numbers tell,
 In dreadfu' raw,
 Thou, TOOTHACHE, surely bear'st the bell,
 Amang them a'!

O thou grim, mischief-making chiel,
 That gars the notes o' discord squeel,
 Till daft mankind aft dance a reel
 In gore, a shoe-thick,
 Gie a' the faes o' SCOTLAND'S weal
 A towmond's toothache!

THE FIVE CARLINS.¹⁸⁴

AN ELECTION BALLAD.

Tune—"Chevy Chase."

THERE was five Carlins in the South,
 They fell upon a scheme,
 To send a lad to London town,
 To bring them tidings hame.

Nor only bring them tidings hame,
 But do their errands there,
 And aiblins gowd and honor baith
 Might be that laddie's share.

There was Maggy by the banks o' Nith,
 A dame wi' pride eneugh;
 And Marjory o' the mony Lochs,
 A Carlin auld and teugh.

And blinkin Bess of Annandale,
 That dwelt near Solway-side;
 And whisky Jean, that took her gill,
 In Galloway sae wide.

And black Joan, frae Crichton Peel,
O' gipsy kith an' kin,
Five wighter Carlins were na found
The South countrie within.

To send a lad to London town,
They met upon a day;
And mony a knight, and mony a laird,
This errand fain wad gae.

O mony a knight, and mony a laird,
This errand fain wad gae;
But nae ane could their fancy please,
O ne'er a ane but twae.

The first ane was a belted Knight,
Bred of a Border band;
And he wad gae to London town,
Might nae man him withstand.

And he wad do their errands weel,
And meikle he wad say;
And ilka ane about the court
Wad bid to him gude-day.

The neist cam in a Soger youth,
Wha spak wi' modest grace,
And he wad gae to London Town,
If sae their pleasure was.

He wad na hecht them courtly gifts,
Nor meikle speech pretend;
But he wad hecht an honest heart,
Wad ne'er desert his friend.

Then, wham to chuse, and wham refuse,
At strife thir Carlins fell;
For some had Gentlefolks to please,
And some wad please themsel.

Then out spak mim-mou'd Meg o' Nith,
And she spak up wi' pride,
And she wad send the Soger youth,
Whatever might betide.

For the auld Gudeman o' London court
She didna care a pin ;
But she wad send the Soger youth,
To greet his eldest son.

Then up sprang Bess o' Annandale,
And a deadly aith she's ta'en,
That she wad vote the Border Knight,
Though she should vote her lane.

For far-off fowls hae feathers fair,
And fools o' change are fain :
But I hae tried the Border Knight,
And I'll try him yet again.

Says Black Joan frae Crichton Peel,
A Carlin stoor and grim,
The auld Gudeman, and the young Gudeman,
For me may sink or swim ;

For fools will prate o' right or wrang,
While knaves laugh them to scorn ,
But the Soger's friends hae blawn the best,
So he shall bear the horn.

Then whisky Jean spak owre her drink,
Ye weel ken, kimmers a',
The auld Gudeman o' London court,
His back's been at the wa' ;

And mony a friend that kiss'd his caup
Is now a fremit wight ;
But it's ne'er be said o' whisky Jean,—
We'll send the Border Knight.

Then slow raise Marjory o' the Lochs,
 And wrinkled was her brow,
 Her ancient weed was russet grey,
 Her auld Scots bluid was true ;

There's some great folk set light by me,
 I set as light by them ;
 But I will send to London town
 Wham I like best at hame.

Sae how their weighty plea may end,
 Nae mortal wight can tell ;
 God grant the King and ilka man
 May look weel to himsel.

ELECTION BALLAD FOR WESTERHA'

THE Laddies by the banks o' Nith
 Wad trust his Grace wi' a', Jamie ;
 But he'll sair them, as he sair'd the King—
 Turn tail and rin awa', Jamie.

Chorus.—Up and waur them a', Jamie,
 Up and waur them a' ;
 The Johnstones hae the guidin o't,
 Ye turncoat Whigs awa' !

The day he stude his country's friend,
 Or gied her faes a claw, Jamie,
 Or frae puir man a blessin wan,
 That day the Duke ne'er saw, Jamie.
 Up and waur them, etc.

But wha is he, his country's boast ?
 Like him there is na twa, Jamie ;
 There's no a callant tents the kye,
 But kens o' Westerha', Jamie.
 Up and waur them, etc.

To end the wark, here's Whistlebirk,
 Lang may his whistle blaw, Jamie ;
 And Maxwell true, o' sterling blue ;
 And we'll be Johnstones a', Jamie.
 Up and waur them, etc.

PROLOGUE SPOKEN AT THE THEATRE OF
 DUMFRIES ¹⁸⁵

ON NEW YEAR'S DAY EVENING, 1790.

No song nor dance I bring from yon great city,
 That queens it o'er our taste—the more's the pity :
 Tho' by-the-bye, abroad why will you roam ?
 Good sense and taste are natives here at home :
 But not for panegyric I appear,
 I come to wish you all a good New Year!
 Old Father Time deposes me here before ye,
 Not for to preach, but tell his simple story :
 The sage grave Ancient cough'd, and bade me say,
 " You're one year older this important day,"
 If *wiser* too—he hinted some suggestion,
 But 'twould be rude, you know, to ask the question ;
 And with a would-be-roguish leer and wink,
 Said—" Sutherland, in one word, bid them THINK !"

Ye sprightly youths, quite flush with hope and spirit,
 Who think to storm the world by dint of merit,
 To you the dotard has a deal to say,
 In his sly, dry, sententious, proverb way !
 He bids you mind, amid your thoughtless rattle,
 That the first blow is ever half the battle ;
 That tho' some by the skirt may try to snatch him,
 Yet by the forelock is the hold to catch him ;
 That whether doing, suffering, or forbearing,
 You may do miracles by persevering.

Last, tho' not least in love, ye youthful fair,
 Angelic forms, high Heaven's peculiar care!
 To you old Bald-pate smoothes his wrinkled brow,
 And humbly begs you'll mind the important—NOW!
 To crown your happiness he asks your leave,
 And offers, bliss to give and to receive.

For our sincere, tho' haply weak endeavours,
 With grateful pride we own your many favours;
 And howsoe'er our tongues may ill reveal it,
 Believe our glowing bosoms truly feel it.

NEW YEAR'S DAY [1700].¹⁸⁶

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

THIS day, Time winds th' exhausted chain;
 To run the twelvemonths' length again.
 I see the old, bald-pated fellow,
 With ardent eyes, complexion sallow,
 Adjust the unimpair'd machine,
 To wheel the equal, dull routine.

The absent lover, minor heir,
 In vain assail him with their prayer;
 Deaf as my friend, he sees them press,
 Nor makes the hour one moment less.
 Will you (the Major's with the hounds,
 The happy tenants share his rounds;
 Coila's fair Rachel's care to-day,
 And blooming Keith's engaged with Gray)
 From housewife cares a minute borrow
 (That grandchild's cap will do to-morrow),
 And join with me a-moralising;
 This day's propitious to be wise in.

First, what did yesternight deliver?
 "Another year has gone for ever."

And what is this day's strong suggestion ?
 "The passing moment's all we rest on!"
 Rest on—for what ? what do we here ?
 Or why regard the passing year ?
 Will Time, amus'd with proverb'd lore,
 Add to our date one minute more ?
 A few days may—a few years must—
 Repose us in the silent dust.
 Then, is it wise to damp our bliss ?
 Yes—all such reasonings are amiss !
 The voice of Nature loudly cries,
 And many a message from the skies,
 That something in us never dies :
 That on this frail, uncertain state,
 Hang matters of eternal weight :
 That future life in worlds unknown
 Must take its hue from this alone ;
 Whether—as heavenly glory bright,
 Or dark as Misery's woeful night.

Since then, my honour'd first of friends,
 On this poor being all depends ;
 Let us th' important *now* employ,
 And live as those who never die.
 Tho' you, with days and honours crown'd,
 Witness that filial circle round
 (A sight life's sorrows to repulse,
 A sight pale Envy to convulse),
 Others now claim your chief regard ;
 Yourself, you wait your bright reward.

PROLOGUE FOR MR. SUTHERLAND ¹⁸⁷
 ON HIS BENEFIT NIGHT AT THE THEATRE, DUMFRIES.

WHAT needs this din about the town o' Lon'on,
 How this new play an' that new sang is comin' ?
 Why is outlandish stuff sae meikle courted ?
 Does nonsense mend, like brandy, when imported ?

Is there nae poet, burning keen for fame,
 Will try to gie us sangs and plays at hame ?
 For Comedy abroad he need na toil,
 A fool and knave are plants of every soil ;
 Nor need he hunt as far as Rome or Greece,
 To gather matter for a serious piece ;
 There's themes enow in Caledonian story,
 Would show the Tragic Muse in a' her glory.—

Is there no daring Bard will rise and tell
 How glorious Wallace stood, how—hapless fell ?
 Where are the Muses fled that could produce
 A drama worthy o' the name o' Bruce ?
 How here, even here, he first unsheath'd the sword
 'Gainst mighty England and her guilty lord ;
 And after mony a bloody, deathless doing,
 Wrench'd his dear country from the jaws of Ruin !
 O for a Shakespeare or an Otway scene,
 To draw the lovely, hapless Scottish Queen !
 Vain all th' omnipotence of female charms
 'Gainst headlong, ruthless, mad Rebellion's arms :
 She fell, but fell with spirit truly Roman,
 To glut that direst foe—a vengeful woman ;
 A woman (tho' the phrase may seem uncivil),
 As able and as wicked as the Devil !
 One Douglas lives in Home's immortal page,
 But Douglasses were heroes every age :
 And tho' your fathers, prodigal of life,
 A Douglas followed to the martial strife,
 Perhaps, if bows row right, and Right succeeds,
 Ye yet may follow where a Douglas leads !

As ye hae generous done, if a' the land
 Would take the Muses' servants by the hand ;
 Not only hear, but patronise, befriend them,
 And where ye justly can commend, commend them ;
 And aiblins when they winna stand the test,
 Wink hard, and say “ The folks hae done their best ! ”

Would a' the land do this, then I'll be caition,
 Ye'll soon hae Poets o' the Scottish nation
 Will gar Fame blaw until her trumpet crack,
 And warsle Time, an' lay him on his back!

For us and for our Stage, should ony spier,
 "Whase aught thae chiels maks a' this bustle here?"
 My best leg foremost, I'll set up my brow—
 We have the honour to belong to you!
 We're your ain bairns, e'en guide us as ye like,
 But like good mithers, shore before ye strike;
 And gratefu' still, I trust ye'll ever find us,
 For gen'rous patronage, and meikle kindness
 We've got frae a' professions, sorts and ranks:
 God help us! we're but poor—ye'se get but thanks.

LINES TO A GENTLEMAN

WHO HAD SENT THE POET A NEWSPAPER, AND OFFERED TO
 CONTINUE IT FREE OF EXPENSE.

KIND Sir, I've read your paper through,
 And faith, to me, 'twas really new!
 How guessed ye, Sir, what maist I wanted?
 This mony a day I've grain'd and gaunted,
 To ken what French mischief was brewin;
 Or what the drumlie Dutch were doin;
 That vile doup-skelper, Emperor Joseph,
 If Venus yet had got his nose off;
 Or how the collieshangie works
 Atween the Russians and the Turks,
 Or if the Swede, before he halt,
 Would play anither Charles the Twalt;
 If Denmark, any body spak o't;
 Or Poland, wha had now the tack o't:
 How cut-throat Prussian blades were hingin;
 How libbet Italy was singin;
 If Spaniard, Portuguese, or Swiss,
 Were sayin or takin aught amiss;

Or how our merry lads at hame,
 In Britain's court kept up the game ;
 How royal George, the Lord leuk o'er him !
 Was managing St. Stephen's quorum ;
 If sleekit Chatham Will was livin,
 Or glaikit Charlie got his nieve in ;
 How daddie Burke the plca was cookin,
 If Warren Hastings' neck was yeukin ;
 How cesses, stents, and fees were rax'd,
 Or if bare a—— yet were tax'd ;
 The news o' princes, dukes, and earls,
 Pimps, sharpers, bawds, and opera-girls ;
 If that daft buckie, Geordie Wales,
 Was threshin still at hizzies' tails ;
 Or if he was grown oughtlins douser,
 And no a perfect kintra cooser :
 A' this and mair I never heard of ;
 And, but for you, I might despair'd of.
 So, gratefu', back your news I send you,
 And pray a' gude things may attend you !

ELLISLAND, *Monday Morning*, 1790.

ELEGY ON WILLIE NICOL'S MARE.¹⁸⁸

PEG NICHOLSON was a good bay mare,
 As ever trod on iron ;
 But now she's floating down the Nith,
 And past the mouth o' Cairn :

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
 An' rode thro' thick an' thin ;
 But now she's floating down the Nith,
 And wanting even the skin.

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
 And ance she bore a priest ;
 But now she's floating down the Nith,
 For Solway fish a feast.

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
 An' the priest he rode her sair ,
 And much oppress'd, and bruis'd she was,
 As priest-rid cattle are.

THE GOWDEN LOCKS OF ANNA.¹⁸⁹

YESTREEN I had a pint o' wine,
 A place where body saw na ;
 Yestreen lay on this breast o' mine
 The gowden locks of Anna.

The hungry Jew in wilderness,
 Rejoicing o'er his manna,
 Was naething to my hiney bliss
 Upon the lips of Anna.

Ye monarchs, take the East and West,
 Frae Indus to Savannah ;
 Gie me, within my straining grasp,
 The melting form of Anna :

There I'll despise Imperial charms,
 An Empress or Sultana,
 While dying raptures, in her arms,
 I give and take wi' Anna !

Awa', thou flaunting God of Day !
 Awa', thou pale Diana !
 Ilk Star, gae hide thy twinkling ray,
 When I'm to meet my Anna !

Come, in thy raven plumage, Night
 (Sun, Moon, and Stars, withdrawn a' ;)
 And bring an angel-pen to write
 My transports with my Anna !

POSTSCRIPT.

The Kirk an' State may join an' tell,
 To do sic things I mauna :
 The Kirk an' State may gae to h—l,
 And I'll gae to my Anna.

She is the sunshine o' my e'e,
 To live but her I canna ,
 Had I on earth but wishes three,
 The first should be my Anna.

I MURDER HATE.

I MURDER hate by flood or field,
 Tho' glory's name may screen us ;
 In wars at home I'll spend my blood—
 I'll fight the wars of Venus.
 The deities that I adore
 Are social Peace and Plenty ;
 I'm better pleas'd to make one more,
 Than be the death of twenty.

I would not die like Socrates,
 For all the fuss of Plato ;
 Nor would I with Leonidas,
 Nor yet would I with Cato :
 The zealots of the Church and State
 Shall ne'er my mortal foes be ;
 But let me have bold Zimri's fate,
 Within the arms of Cozbi!

GUDEWIFE, COUNT THE LAWIN.¹⁹⁰

GANE is the day, and mirk's the night,
 But we'll ne'er stray for faute o' light ;
 Gude ale and brandy's stars and moon,
 And blude-red wine's the rysin sun.

Chorus.—Then, gudewife, count the lawin,
 The lawin, the lawin,
 Then, gudewife, count the lawin,
 And bring a coggie mair.

There's wealth and ease for gentlemen,
 And simple folk maun fecht and fen':
 But here we're a' in ae accord,
 For ilka man that's drunk's a lord.
 Then, gudewife, etc.

My coggie is a haly pool
 That heals the wounds o' care and dool;
 And Pleasure is a wanton trout,
 An ye drink it a', ye'll find him out.
 Then, gudewife, etc.

ELECTION BALLAD

AT CLOSE OF THE CONTEST FOR REPRESENTING THE DUMFRIES
 BURGHS, 1790.

Addressed to R. GRAHAM, Esq., of Fintry.

FINTRY, my stay in worldly strife,
 Friend o' my Muse, friend o' my life,
 Are ye as idle's I am?
 Come then, wi' uncouth kintra fleg,
 O'er Pegasus I'll fling my leg,
 And ye shall see me try him.

But where shall I go rin a ride,
 That I may splatter nane beside?
 I wad na be uncivil:
 In manhood's various paths and ways
 There's ay some doytin body strays,
 And I ride like the devil.

Thus I break aff wi' a' my birr,
An' down yon dark, deep alley spur,
 Where Theologics daunder :
Alas ! curst wi' eternal fogs,
And damn'd in everlasting bogs,
 As sure's the creed I'll blunder !

I'll stain a band, or jaup a gown,
Or rin my reckless, guilty crown
 Against the haly door :
Sair do I rue my luckless fate,
When, as the Muse an' Deil wad hae't,
 I rade that road before.

Suppose I take a spurt, and mix
Amang the wilds o' Politics—
 Elector and elected,
Where dogs at Court (sad sons of bitches !)
Septennially a madness touches,
 Till all the land's infected.

All hail ! Drumlanrig's haughty Grace,
Discarded remnant of a race
 Once godlike—great in story ;
Thy forbears' virtues all contrasted,
The very name of Douglas blasted,
 Thine that inverted glory !

Hate, envy, oft the Douglas bore,
But thou hast superadded more,
 And sunk them in contempt ;
Follies and crimes have stain'd the name,
But, Queensberry, thine the virgin claim,
 From aught that's good exempt !

I'll sing the zeal Drumlanrig bears,
Who left the all-important cares
 Of princes, and their darlings :

And, bent on winning borough towns,
Came shaking hands wi' wabster-loons,
And kissing barefit carlins.

Combustion thro' our boroughs rode,
Whistling his roaring pack abroad
Of mad unmuzzled lions ;
As Queensberry blue and buff unfurl'd,
And Westerha' and Hopeton hurl'd,
To every Whig defiance.

But cautious Queensberry left the war,
Th' unmanner'd dust might soil his star,
Besides, he hated *bleeding* ;
But left behind him heroes bright,
Heroes in Cæsarean fight,
Or Ciceronian pleading.

O for a throat like huge Mons-Meg,
To muster o'er each ardent Whig
Beneath Drumlanrig's banners ;
Heroes and heroines commix,
All in the field of politics,
To win immortal honors.

M'Murdo and his lovely spouse
(Th' enamour'd laurels kiss her brows !)
Led on the Loves and Graces :
She won each gaping burgess' heart,
While he, sub rosa, played his part
Among their wives and lasses.

Craigdarroch led a light-arm'd core,
Tropes, metaphors, and figures pour,
Like Hecla streaming thunder :
Glenriddel, skill'd in rusty coins,
Blew up each Tory's dark designs,
And bared the treason under.

In either wing two champions fought ;
Redoubted Staig, who set at nought
 The wildest savage Tory ;
And Welsh, who ne'er yet flinch'd his ground,
High-wav'd his magnum-bonum round
 With Cyclopean fury.

Miller brought up th' artillery ranks,
The many-pounders of the Banks,
 Resistless desolation !
While Maxwelton, that baron bold,
'Mid Lawson's port entrench'd his hold,
 And threaten'd worse damnation.

To these what Tory hosts oppos'd,
With these what Tory warriors clos'd,
 Surpasses my describing :
Squadrons, extended long and large,
With furious speed rush to the charge,
 Like furious devils driving.

What verse can sing, what prose narrate,
The butcher deeds of bloody Fate,
 Amid this mighty tulyie !
Grim Horror girn'd, pale Terror roar'd,
As Murder at his thrapple shor'd,
 And Hell mix'd in the brulyie.

As Highland craigs by thunder cleft,
When lightnings fire the stormy lift,
 Hurl down with crashing rattle ;
As flames among a hundred woods,
As headlong foam a hundred floods,
 Such is the rage of Battle.

The stubborn Tories dare to die ;
As soon the rooted oaks would fly
 Before th' approaching fellers :

POEMS AND SONGS.

The Whigs come on like Ocean's roar,
 When all his wintry billows pour
 Against the Buchan Bullers.

Lo, from the shades of Death's deep night,
 Departed Whigs enjoy the fight,
 And think on former daring:
 The muffled murderer of Charles
 The Magna Charta flag unfurls,
 All deadly gules its bearing.

Nor wanting ghosts of Tory fame;
 Bold Scrimgeour follows gallant Graham;
 Auld Covenanters shiver—
 Forgive! forgive! much-wrong'd Montrose!
 Now Death and Hell engulph thy foes,
 Thou liv'st on high for ever.

Still o'er the field the combat burns,
 The Tories, Whigs, give way by turns;
 But Fate the word has spoken:
 For woman's wit and strength o' man,
 Alas! can do but what they can;
 The Tory ranks are broken.

O that my een were flowing burns!
 My voice, a lioness that mourns
 Her darling cubs' *וְיָדָהּ* !
 That I might greet, that I might cry,
 While Tories fall, while Tories fly,
 And furious Whigs pursuing!

What Whig but melts for good Sir James,
 Dear to his country, by the names,
 Friend, Patron, Benefactor!
 Not Pulteney's wealth can Pulteney save;
 And Hopeton falls, the generous, brave;
 And Stewart, bold as Hector.

Thou, Pitt, shalt rue this overthrow,
 And Thurlow growl a curse of woe,
 And Melville melt in wailing :
 Now Fox and Sheridan rejoice,
 And Burke shall sing, O Prince, arise!
 Thy power is all prevailing!

For your poor friend, the Bard, afar
 He only hears and sees the war,
 A cool spectator purely !
 So, when the storm the forest rends,
 The robin in the hedge descends,
 And sober chirps securely.

Now, for my friends' and brethren's sakes,
 And for my dear-lov'd Land o' Cakes,
 I pray with holy fire :
 Lord, send a rough-shod troop o' Hell
 O'er a' wad Scotland buy or sell,
 To grind them in the mire!

ELEGY ON CAPTAIN MATTHEW HENDERSON,¹⁹¹

A GENTLEMAN WHO HELD THE PATENT FOR HIS HONOURS
 IMMEDIATELY FROM ALMIGHTY GOD.

"Should the poor be flattered."—*Shakespeare*.

O DEATH! thou tyrant fell and bloody!
 The meikle devil wi' a woodie
 Haur! thee hame to his black smiddie,
 O'er hurcheon hides,
 And like stock-fish come o'er his studdie
 Wi' thy auld sides!

He's gane, he's gane! he's frae us torn,
 The ae best fellow e'er was born!
 Thee, Matthew, Nature's sel' shall mourn,
 By wood and wild,
 Where, haply, Pity strays forlorn,
 Frae man exil'd.

Ye hills, near neibours o' the starns,
 That proudly cock your cresting cairns!
 Ye cliffs, the haunts of sailing earns,
 Where Echo slumbers!
 Come, join ye, Nature's sturdiest bairns,
 My wailing numbers!

Mourn, ilka grove the cushat kens!
 Ye haz'ly shaws and briery dens!
 Ye burnies, wimplin down your glens,
 Wi' toddlin din,
 Or foaming, strang, wi' hasty stens,
 Frae lin to lin.

Mourn, little harebells o'er the lea;
 Ye stately foxgloves, fair to see;
 Ye woodbines hanging bonilie,
 In scented bow'rs;
 Ye roses on your thorny tree,
 The first o' flow'rs.

At dawn, when ev'ry grassy blade
 Droops with a diamond at his head,
 At ev'n, when beans their fragrance shed,
 I' th' rustling gale,
 Ye maukins, whiddin thro' the glade,
 Come join my wail.

Mourn, ye wee songsters o' the wood;
 Ye grouse that crap the heather bud;
 Ye curlews, calling thro' a clud;
 Ye whistling plover;
 And mourn, ye whirling paitrick brood;
 He's gane for ever!

Mourn, sooty coots, and speckled teals;
 Ye fisher herons, an' their eels;
 Ye duck and drake, wi' airy wheels
 Circling the lake;
 Ye bitterns, till the quagmire reels,
 Rair for his sake.

Mourn, clam'ring craiks at close o' day,
'Mang fields o' flow'ring clover gay ;
And when ye wing your annual way
 Frae our cauld shore,
Tell thae far warlds wha lies in clay,
 Wham we deplore.

Ye houlets, frae your ivy bow'r
In some auld tree, or eldritch tow'r,
What time the moon, wi' silent glow'r,
 Sets up her horn,
Wail thro' the dreary midnight hour,
 Till waukrife morn !

O rivers, forests, hills, and plains !
Oft have ye heard my canty strains :
But now, what else for me remains
 But tales of woe ;
And frae my een the drapping rains
 Maun ever flow.

Mourn, Spring, thou darling of the year !
Ilk cowslip cup shall kep a tear :
Thou, Simmer, while each corny spear
 Shoots up its head,
Thy gay, green, flow'ry tresses shear,
 For him that's dead !

Thou, Autumn, wi' thy yellow hair,
In grief thy fallow mantle tear !
Thou, Winter, hurling thro' the air
 The roaring blast,
Wide o'er the naked world declare
 The worth we've lost !

Mourn him, thou Sun, great source of light !
Mourn, Empress of the silent night !
And you, ye twinkling starnies bright,
 My Matthew mourn !
For through your orbs he's ta'en his flight,
 Ne'er to return.

O Henderson! the man! the brother!
And art thou gone, and gone for ever!
And hast thou crost that unknown river,
 Life's dreary bound!
Like thee, where shall I find another,
 The world around?

Go to your sculptur'd tombs, ye great,
In a' the tinsel trash o' state!
But by thy honest turf I'll wait,
 Thou man of worth!
And weep the ae best fellow's fate
 E'er lay in earth.

THE EPITAPH.

Stop, passenger! my story's brief,
And truth I shall relate, man;
I tell nae common tale o' grief,
For Matthew was a great man.

If thou uncommon merit hast,
Yet spurn'd at Fortune's door, man;
A look of pity hither cast,
For Matthew was a poor man.

If thou a noble sodger art,
That passest by this grave, man;
There moulders here a gallant heart,
For Matthew was a brave man.

If thou on men, their works and ways,
Canst throw uncommon light, man;
Here lies wha weel had won thy praise,
For Matthew was a bright man.

If thou, at Friendship's sacred ca',
Wad life itself resign, man;
Thy sympathetic tear maun fa',
For Matthew was a kind man.

If thou art staunch, without a stain,
 Like the unchanging blue, man ;
 This was a kinsman o' thy ain,
 For Matthew was a true man.

If thou hast wit, and fun, and fire,
 And ne'er guid wine did fear, man ;
 This was thy billie, dam, and sire,
 For Matthew was a queer man.

If ony whiggish, whingin sot,
 To blame poor Matthew dare, man ;
 May dool and sorrow be his lot,
 For Matthew was a rare man.

But now his radiant course is run,
 For Matthew's was a bright one !
 His soul was like the glorious sun,
 A matchless, Heav'nly light, man.

VERSES ON CAPTAIN GROSE.¹⁹²

WRITTEN ON AN ENVELOPE, ENCLOSING A LETTER TO HIM.

KEN ye ought o' Captain Grose ?—Igo and ago,
 If he's among his friends or foes ?—Iram, coram, dago,
 Is he to Abra'm's bosom gane ?—Igo and ago,
 Or haudin Sarah by the wame ?—Iram, coram, dago

Is he south or is he north ?—Igo and ago,
 Or drownèd in the river Forth ?—Iram, coram, dago,
 Is he slain by Hielan' bodies ?—Igo and ago,
 And eaten like a wether haggis ?—Iram, coram, dago.

Where'er he be, the Lord be near him !—Igo and ago,
 As for the deil, he daur na steer him,—Iram, coram, dago,
 But please transmit th' enclosed letter,—Igo and ago,
 Which will oblige your humble debtor,—Iram, coram, dago.

So may ye hae auld stanes in store,—Igo and ago,
 The very stanes that Adam bore,—Iram, coram, dago,
 So may ye get in glad possession,—Igo and ago,
 The coins o' Satan's coronation!—Iram, coram, dago.

TAM O' SHANTER.¹⁹³

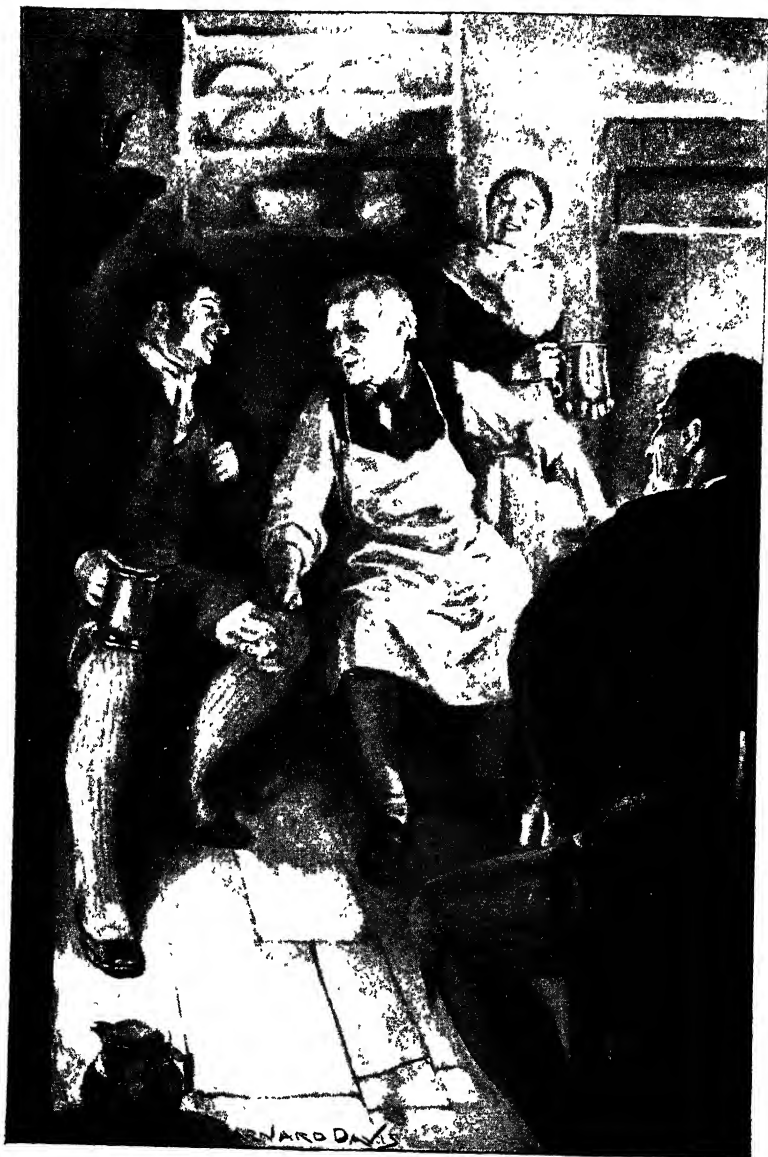
A TALE.

"Of Brownjis and of Bogillis full is this Buke."—GAWIN DOUGLAS.

WHEN chapman billies leave the street,
 And drouthy neibors, neibors meet;
 As market days are wearing late,
 An' folk begin to tak the gate;
 While we sit bousing at the nappy,
 An' getting fou and unco happy,
 We think na on the lang Scots miles,
 The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,
 That lie between us and our hame,
 Where sits our sulky, sullen dame,
 Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
 Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest TAM O' SHANTER,
 As he frae Ayr ae night did canter:
 (Auld Ayr, whom ne'er a town surpasses,
 For honest men and bonie lasses).

O Tam! had'st thou but been sae wise,
 As taen thy ain wife Kate's advice!
 She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,
 A bletherin, blusterin, drunken blellum;
 That frae November till October,
 Ae market-day thou was na sober;
 That ilka melder wi' the miller,
 Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
 That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on
 The 'smith and thee gat roarin fou on;



BU.

"Kings may be b'est, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious."

That at the L—d's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied that, late or soon,
Thou wad be found, deep drown'd in Doon,
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
To think how mony counsels sweet,
How mony lengthen'd, sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale:—Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnie,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony:
Tam lo'ed him like a very brither,
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs an' clatter;
And ay the ale was growing better:
The Landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' secret favours, sweet and precious:
The Souter tauld his queerest stories;
The Landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel amang the nappy.
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure:
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;

Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place ;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.
Nae man can tether Time nor Tide,
The hour approaches Tam maun ride—
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour Tam mounts his beast in ;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last ;
The rattling showers rose on the blast ;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd ;
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellow'd ;
That night, a child might understand,
The deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his grey mare, Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire ;
Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet,
Whiles crooning o'er an auld Scots sonnet,
Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares ;
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Where ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was 'cross the ford,
Where in the snaw the chapman smoor'd ;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Where drunken Charlie brak 's neck-bane ;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Where hunters fand the murder'd bairn ;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Where Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.
Before him Doon pours all his floods,
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods,

The lightnings flash frae pole to pole,
Near and more near the thunders roll,
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze,
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring, bold John Barleycorn!
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquabae, we'll face the devil!
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle.
But Maggie stood, right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light;
And, wow! Tam saw an unco sight!

Warlocks and witches in a dance:
Nae cotillion, brent new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
A winnock-bunker in the east,
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A towzie tyke, black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge:
He screw'd the pipes, and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.—
Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And (by some devilish cantraip sleight)
Each in its cauld hand held a light,
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes, in gibbet-airns;
Twa span-lang, wee unchristen'd bairns,
A thief, new-cutted frae a rapc,
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;

Five tomahawks, wi' blude red-rusted;
 Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted;
 A garter, which a babe had strangled;
 A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
 Whom his ain son of life bereft,
 The grey hairs yet stack to the heft;
 Wi' mair of horrible and awfu',
 Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glow'r'd, amaz'd, and curious,
 The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;
 The piper loud and louder blew,
 The dancers quick and quicker flew,
 They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
 Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
 And coost her duddies on the wark,
 And linket at it in her sark!

Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,
 A' plump and strapping in their teens!
 Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
 Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen!—
 Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
 That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair;—
 I wad hae gien them off my hurdies,
 For ae blink o' the bonie burdies!
 But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
 Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,
 Louping an' flinging on a crummock,
 I wonder did na turn thy stomach.

But Tam kent what was what fu' brawlie:
 There was ae winsome wench and waulie,
 That night enlisted in the core,
 Lang after kenn'd on Carrick shore
 (For mony a beast to dead she shot,
 And perish'd mony a bonie boat,
 And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
 And held the country-side in fear);

Her cutty sark, o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.
Ah! little kent thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches),
Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cour,
Sic flights are far beyond her power;
To sing how Nannie lap and flang
(A souple jade she was and strang),
And how Tam stood, like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd;
Even Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main:
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant all was dark:
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
When plundering herds assail their byke;
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' mony an eldritch skriech and hollow.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane o' the brig;

There, at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross.
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient a tail she had to shake!
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle!
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain grey tail:
The carlin clautht her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Each man, and mother's son, take heed:
Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or Cutty-sarks rin in your mind,
Think! ye may buy the joys o'er dear,
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

ON THE BIRTH OF A POSTHUMOUS CHILD,
BORN IN PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES OF FAMILY DISTRESS.

SWEET flow'ret, pledge o' meikle love,
And ward o' mony a prayer,
What heart o' stane wad thou na move,
Sae helpless, sweet, and fair.

November hirples o'er the lea,
Chill, on thy lovely form:
And gane, alas! the shelt'ring tree,
Should shield thee frae the storm.

May He who gives the rain to pour,
And wings the blast to blaw,
Protect thee frae the driving show'r,
The bitter frost and snaw.

May He, the friend o' Woe and Want,
Who heals life's various stounds,
Protect and guard the mother plant,
And heal her cruel wounds.

But late she flourish'd, rooted fast,
Fair on the summer morn,
Now, feebly bends she, in the blast,
Unshelter'd and forlorn.

Blest be thy bloom, thou lovely gem,
Unscath'd by ruffian hand!
And from thee many a parent stem
Arise to deck our land!

ELEGY ON THE LATE MISS BURNET OF
MONBODDO.¹⁹⁴

LIFE ne'er exulted in so rich a prize,
As Burnet, lovely from her native skies ;
Nor envious death so triumph'd in a blow,
As that which laid th' accomplish'd Burnet low.

Thy form and mind, sweet maid, can I forget ?
In richest ore the brightest jewel set !
In thee, high Heaven above was truest shown,
As by His noblest work the Godhead best is known.

In vain ye flaunt in summer's pride, ye groves ;
Thou crystal streamlet with thy flowery shore,
Ye woodland choir that chaunt your idle loves,
Ye cease to charm—Eliza is no more.

Ye heathy wastes, immix'd with reedy fens ;
Ye mossy streams, with sedge and rushes stor'd ;
Ye rugged cliffs, o'erhanging dreary glens,
To you I fly—ye with my soul accord.

Princes, whose cumb'rous pride was all their worth,
Shall venal lays their pompous exit hail,
And thou, sweet excellence! forsake our earth,
And not a Muse with honest grief bewail?

We saw thee shine in youth and beauty's pride,
And Virtue's light, that beams beyond the spheres;
But, like the sun eclips'd at morning tide,
Thou left us, darkling in a world of tears.

The parent's heart that nestled fond in thee,
That heart how sunk, a prey to grief and care;
So deckt the woodbine sweet yon aged tree;
So, from it ravish'd, leaves it bleak and bare.

LAMENT OF MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS,¹⁹⁵

ON THE APPROACH OF SPRING.

Now Nature hangs her mantle green
On every blooming tree,
And spreads her sheets o' daisies white
Out o'er the grassy lea:
Now Phoebus cheers the crystal streams,
And glads the azure skies;
But nought can glad the weary wight
That fast in durance lies.

Now laverocks wake the merry morn
Aloft on dewy wing;
The merle, in his noontide bow'r,
Makes woodland echoes ring;
The mavis wild, wi' mony a note,
Sings drowsy day to rest:
In love and freedom they rejoice,
Wi' care nor thrall opprest.

Now blooms the lily by the bank,
The primrose down the brae ;
The hawthorn's budding in the glen,
And milk-white is the slae :
The meanest hind in fair Scotland
May rove thae sweets amang ;
But I, the Queen of a' Scotland,
Maun lie in prison strang.

I was the Queen o' bonie France,
Where happy I hae been ;
Fu' lightly rase I in the morn,
As blythe lay down at e'en :
And I'm the sov'reign of Scotland,
And mony a traitor there ;
Yet here I lie in foreign bands,
And never-ending care.

But as for thee, thou false woman,
My sister and my fae,
Grim Vengeance yet shall whet a sword
That thro' thy soul shall gae :
The weeping blood in woman's breast
Was never known to thee ;
Nor th' balm that drops on wounds of woe
Frae woman's pitying e'e.

My son! my son! may kinder stars
Upon thy fortune shine ;
And may those pleasures gild thy reign,
That ne'er wad blink on mine !
God keep thee frae thy mother's faes,
Or turn their hearts to thee :
And where thou meet'st thy mother's friend,
Remember him for me !

O! soon, to me, may Summer suns
Nae mair light up the morn!
Nae mair to me the Autumn winds
Wave o'er the yellow corn!
And, in the narrow house of death,
Let Winter round me rave;
And the next flow'rs that deck the Spring,
Bloom on my peaceful grave!

THERE'LL NEVER BE PEACE TILL JAMIE COMES HAME.

By yon Castle wa', at the close of the day,
I heard a man sing, tho' his head it was grey;
And as he was singing, the tears doon came,—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.

The Church is in ruins, the State is in jars,
Delusions, oppressions, and murderous wars,
We dare na weel say't, but we ken wha's to blame,—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.

My seven braw sons for Jamie drew sword,
But now I greet round their green beds in the yerd;
It brak the sweet heart o' my faithfu' auld dame,—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.

Now life is a burden that bows me down,
Sin I tint my bairns, and he tint his crown;
But till my last moments my words are the same—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.

OUT OVER THE FORTH.

OUT over the Forth, I look to the north;
But what is the north and its Highlands to me?
The south nor the east gie ease to my breast,
The far foreign land, or the wide rolling sea.

But I look to the west when I gae to rest,
That happy my dreams and my slumbers may be ;
For far in the west lives he I loe best,
The man that is dear to my babie and me.

THE BANKS O' DOON.¹⁹⁶

FIRST VERSION.

SWEET are the banks—the banks o' Doon,
The spreading flowers are fair,
And everything is blythe and glad,
But I am fu' o' care.
Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings upon the bough ,
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my fause Luve was true :
Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings beside thy mate ;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon,
To see the woodbine twine ;
And ilka bird sang o' its Luve,
And sae did I o' mine :
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Upon its thorny tree ;
But my fause Luvver staw my rose,
And left the thorn wi' me :
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Upon a morn in June ;
And sae I flourished on the morn,
And sae was pu'd or' noon !

THE BANKS O' DOON.

SECOND VERSION.

YE flowery banks o' bonie Doon,
How can ye blume sae fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care?
Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my fause Luve was true.
Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon,
To see the woodbine twine;
And ilka bird sang o' its Luve,
And sae did I o' mine:
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Upon a morn in June;
How like that rose my blooming morn,
Sae darkly set ere noon!
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Upon its thorny tree;
But my fause Luvver staw my rose,
And left the thorn wi' me.

THE BANKS O' DOON

THIRD VERSION.

YE banks and braes o' bonie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary fu' o' care?



*Photo by G. W. Wilton & Co., Ltd
B.V.*

"Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon
To see the rose and woodbine twine,"

Thou'll break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons thro' the flowering thorn :
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed never to return.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine ;
And ilka bird sang o' its Luve,
And fondly sae did I o' mine ;
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree!
And my fause Luver staw my rose,
But ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

LAMENT FOR JAMES, EARL OF GLENCAIRN.¹⁸⁷

THE wind blew hollow frae the hills,
By fits the sun's departing beam
Look'd on the fading yellow woods,
That wav'd o'er Lugar's winding stream :
Beneath a craigy steep, a Bard,
Laden with years and meikle pain,
In loud lament bewail'd his lord,
Whom Death had all untimely ta'en.

He lean'd him to an ancient aik,
Whose trunk was mould'ring down with years ;
His locks were bleached white with time,
His hoary cheek was wet wi' tears :
And as he touch'd his trembling harp,
And as he tun'd his doleful sang,
The winds, lamenting thro' their caves,
To Echo bore the notes alang.

"Ye scatter'd birds that faintly sing,
The reliques o' the vernal queire !
Ye woods that shed on a' the winds
The honors o' the agèd year !

A few short months, and, glad and gay,
Again ye'll charm the ear and e'e ;
But nocht in all revolving time
Can gladness bring again to me.

" I am a bending agèd tree,
That long has stood the wind and rain ;
But now has come a cruel blast,
And my last hold of earth is gane ;
Nae leaf o' mine shall greet the spring,
Nae simmer sun exalt my bloom ;
But I maun lie before the storm,
And others plant them in my room.

" I've seen sae mony changefu' years,
On earth I am a stranger grown :
I wander in the ways of men,
Alike unknowing, and unknown :
Unheard,, unpitied, unreliev'd,
I bear alane my lade o' care,
For silent, low, on beds of dust,
Lie a' that would my sorrows share.

" And last (the sum of a' my griefs!)
My noble master lies in clay ;
The flow'r amang our barons bold,
His country's pride, his country's stay :
In weary being now I pine,
For a' the life of life is dead,
And hope has left my agèd ken,
On forward wing for ever fled.

" Awake thy last sad voice, my harp!
The voice of woe and wild despair!
Awake, resound thy latest lay,
Then sleep in silence evermair!

And thou, my last, best, only friend,
That fillest an untimely tomb,
Accept this tribute from the Bard
Thou brought from Fortune's mirkest gloom.

"In Poverty's low barren vale,
Thick mists obscure, involv'd me round :
Though oft I turn'd the wistful eye,
Nae ray of fame was to be found :
Thou found'st me, like the morning sun
That melts the fogs in limpid air,
The friendless Bard and rustic song
Became alike thy fostering care.

"O! why has worth so short a date,
While villains ripen grey with time !
Must thou, the noble, gen'rous, great,
Fall in bold manhood's hardy prime !
Why did I live to see that day—
A day to me so full of woe ?
O! had I met the mortal shaft
That laid my benefactor low !

"The bridegroom may forget the bride
Was made his wedded wife yestreen ;
The monarch may forget the crown
That on his head an hour has been ;
The mother may forget the child
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee ;
But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
And a' that thou hast done for me !"

LINES TO SIR JOHN WHITEFOORD, BART.,

SENT WITH THE FOREGOING POEM.

THOU, who thy honor as thy God rever'st,
Who, save thy mind's reproach, nought earthly fear'st,

To thee this votive offering I impart,
The tearful tribute of a broken heart.
The *Friend* thou valued'st, I, the *Patron* lov'd,
His worth, his honor, all the world approved :
We'll mourn till we too go as he has gone,
And tread the shadowy path to that dark world unknown.

CRAIGIEBURN WOOD.¹⁹⁸

SWEET closes the ev'ning on Craigieburn Wood,
And blythely awaukens the morrow ;
But the pride o' the spring on the Craigieburn Wood
Can yield me nought but sorrow.

Chorus.—Beyond thee, dearie, beyond thee, dearie,
And O to be lying beyond thee!
O sweetly, soundly, weel may he sleep
That's laid in the bed beyond thee!

I see the spreading leaves and flowers,
I hear the wild birds singing ;
But pleasure they hae nane for me,
While care my heart is wringing.
Beyond thee, etc.

I canna tell, I maunna tell,
I daur na for your anger ;
But secret love will break my heart,
If I conceal it langer.
Beyond thee, etc.

I see thee gracefu', straight and tall,
I see thee sweet and bonie ;
But oh, what will my torment be,
If thou refuse thy Johnie!
Beyond thee, etc.

To see thee in another's arms,
 In love to lie and languish,
 'Twad be my dead, that will be seen,
 My heart wad burst wi' anguish
 Beyond thee, etc

But Jeanie, say thou wilt be mine,
 Say thou loes nane before me,
 And a' my days o' life to come
 I'll gratefully adore thee.
 Beyond thee, etc.

THE BONIE WEE THING.¹⁹⁹

Chorus.—Bonie wee thing, cannie wee thing,
 Lovely wee thing, wert thou mine,
 I wad wear thee in my bosom,
 Lest my jewel it sh'uld tine

WISHFULLY I look and languish
 In that bonie face o' thine,
 And my heart it stounds wi' anguish,
 Lest my wee thing be na mine
 Bonie wee thing, etc.

Wit and Grace, and Love, and Beauty,
 In ae constellation shine;
 To adore thee is my duty,
 Goddess o' this soul o' mine!
 Bonie wee thing, etc.

EPIGRAM ON MISS DAVIES.²⁰⁰

ON BEING ASKED WHY SHE HAD BEEN FORMED SO LITTLE,
 AND MRS. A—— SO BIG.

ASK why God made the gem so small?
 And why so huge the granite?—
 Because God meant mankind should set
 That higher value on it

THE CHARMS OF LOVELY DAVIES.

O HOW shall I, unskilfu', try
The poet's occupation ?
The tunefu' powers, in happy hours,
That whisper inspiration ;
Even they maun dare an effort mair
Than aught they ever gave us,
Ere they rehearse, in equal verse,
The charms o' lovely Davies.

Each eye, it cheers when she appears,
Like Phœbus in the morning,
When past the shower, and every flower
The garden is adorning ;
As the wretch looks o'er Siberia's shore,
When winter-bound the wave is ;
Sae droops our heart, when we maun part
Frae charming, lovely Davies.

Her smile's a gift frae 'boon the lift,
That maks us mair than princes ;
A sceptred hand, a king's command,
Is in her darting glances ;
The man in arms 'gainst female charms,
Even he her willing slave is,
He hugs his chain, and owns the reign
Of conquering, lovely Davies.

My Muse! to dream of such a theme,
Thy feeble powers surrender :
The eagle's gaze alòne surveys
The sun's meridian splendor.
I wad in vain essay the strain,
The deed too daring brave is ;
I'll drap the lyre, and mute admire
The charms o' lovely Davies.

WHAT CAN A YOUNG LASSIE DO WI' AN AULD MAN?

WHAT can a young lassie, what shall a young lassie,
 What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man ?
 Bad luck on the penny that tempted my minnie
 To sell her puir Jenny for siller an' lan' !
 Bad luck on the penny that tempted my minnie
 To sell her puir Jenny for siller an' lan' !

He's always compleenin frae mornin to eenin,
 He hoasts and he hirples the weary day lang ;
 He's doylt and he's dozin, his blude it is frozen,—
 O dreary's the night wi' a crazy auld man !
 He's doylt and he's dozin, his blude it is frozen,
 O dreary's the night wi' a crazy auld man

He hums and he hankers, he frets and he cankers,
 I never can please him do a' that I can ;
 He's peevish an' jealous o' a' the young fellows,—
 O dool on the day I met wi' an auld man !
 He's peevish an' jealous o' a' the young fellows,
 O dool on the day I met wi' an auld man.

My auld auntie Katie upon me taks pity,
 I'll do my endeavour to follow her plan ,
 I'll cross him an' wrack him, until I heartbreak him,
 And then his auld brass 'ill buy me a new pan !
 I'll cross him an' wrack him, until I heartbreak him,
 And then his auld brass 'ill buy me a new pan.

THE POSIE.²⁰¹

O LUVE will venture in where it daur na weel be seen,
 O luve will venture in where wisdom ance hath been ;
 But I will doun yon river rove, amang the wood sae green,
 And a' to pu' a Posie to my ain dear May.

The primrose I will pu', the firstling o' the year,
And I will pu' the pink, the emblem o' my dear ;
For she's the pink o' womankind, and blooms without a peer,
And a' to be a Posie to my ain dear May.

I'll pu' the budding rose, when Phoebus peeps in view,
For it's like a baumy kiss o' her sweet, bonie mou ;
The hyacinth's for constancy wi' its unchanging blue,
And a' to be a Posie to my ain dear May.

The lily it is pure, and the lily it is fair,
And in her lovely bosom I'll place the lily there ;
The daisy's for simplicity and unaffected air,
And a' to be a Posie to my ain dear May.

The hawthorn I will pu', wi' its locks o' siller gray,
Where, like an aged man, it stands at break o' day ;
But the songster's nest within the bush I winna tak away,
And a' to be a Posie to my ain dear May.

The woodbine I will pu', when the e'ening star is near,
And the diamond draps o' dew shall be her een sae clear ;
The violet's for modesty, which weel she fa's to wear,
And a' to be a Posie to my ain dear May.

I'll tie the Posie round wi' the silken band o' luvè,
And I'll place it in her breast, and I'll swear by a' above,
That to my latest draught o' life the band shall ne'er remove,
And this will be a Posie to my ain dear May.

ON GLENRIDDELL'S FOX BREAKING HIS CHAIN.

A FRAGMENT, 1791.

THOU, Liberty, thou art my theme ;
Not such as idle poets dream,
Who trick thee up a heathen goddess
That a fantastic cap and rod has ;

Such stale conceits are poor and silly ;
 I paint thee out, a Highland filly,
 A sturdy, stubborn, handsome dapple,
 As sleek's a mouse, as round's an apple,
 That when thou pleasest can do wonders ;
 But when thy luckless rider blunders,
 Or if thy fancy should demur there,
 Wilt break thy neck ere thou go further.

These things premised, I sing—a Fox
 Was caught among his native rocks,
 And to a dirty kennel chained,
 How he his liberty regained.

Glenriddell! a Whig without a stain,
 A whig in principle and grain,
 Could'st thou enslave a free-born creature,
 A native denizen of Nature ?
 How could'st thou, with a heart so good
 (A better ne'er was sluiced with blood),
 Nail a poor devil to a tree,
 That ne'er did harm to thine or thee ?

The staunchest Whig Glenriddell was,
 Quite frantic in his country's cause ,
 And oft was Reynard's prison passing,
 And with his brother-Whigs canvassing
 The Rights of Men, the Powers of Women,
 With all the dignity of Freemen.

Sir Reynard daily heard debates
 Of Princes', Kings', and Nations' fates,
 With many rueful, bloody stories
 Of Tyrants, Jacobites, and Tones .
 From liberty how angels fell,
 That now are galley-slaves in hell ;
 How Nimrod first the trade began
 Of binding Slavery's chains on Man ;

How fell Semiramis—G—d d-mn her!
 Did first, with sacrilegious hammer
 (And ills till then were trivial matters),
 For Man dethron'd forge hen-peck fetters;
 How Xerxes, that abandoned Tory,
 Thought cutting throats was reaping glory,
 Until the stubborn Whigs of Sparta
 Taught him great Nature's Magna Charta;
 How mighty Rome her fiat hurl'd
 Resistless o'er a bowing world,
 And, kinder than they did desire,
 Polish'd mankind with sword and fire;
 With much, too tedious to relate,
 Of ancient and of modern date,
 But ending still, how Billy Pitt
 (Unlucky boy!) with wicked wit,
 Has gagg'd old Britain, drain'd her coffer,
 As butchers bind and bleed a heifer.

Thus wily Reynard, by degrees,
 In kennel listening at his ease,
 Suck'd in a mighty stock of knowledge,
 As much as some folks at a College;
 Knew Britain's rights and constitution,
 Her aggrandisement, diminution,
 How fortune wrought us good from evil;
 Let no man, then, despise the Devil,
 As who should say, "I ne'er can need him,"
 Since we to scoundrels owe our freedom.

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CALEDONIA—A BALLAD.

Tune—"Caledonian Hunt's Delight" of Mr. Gow.

THERE was once a time, but old Time was then young,
 That brave Caledonia, the chief of her line,
 From some of your northern deities sprung,
 (Who knows not that brave Caledonia's divine?)

From Tweed to the Orcades was her domain,
To hunt, or to pasture, or do what she would :
Her heav'nly relations there fix'd her reign,
And pledg'd her their godheads to warrant it good.

A lambkin in peace, but a lion in war,
The pride of her kindred, the heroine grew :
Her grandsire, old Odin, triumphantly swore,—
“ Whoe'er shall provoke thee, th' encounter shall rue !”
With tillage or pasture at times she would sport,
To feed her fair flocks by her green rustling corn ;
But chiefly the woods were her fav'rite resort,
Her darling amusement, the hounds and the horn.

Long quiet she reigned ; till thitherward steers
A flight of bold eagles from Adria's strand :
Repeated, successive, for many long years,
They darken'd the air, and they plunder'd the land :
Their pounces were murder, and terror their cry,
They'd conquer'd and ruin'd a world beside ;
She took to her hills, and her arrows let fly,
The daring invaders, they fled or they died.

The Cameleon-Savage disturb'd her repose,
With tumult, disquiet, rebellion, and strife ;
Provok'd beyond bearing, at last she arose,
And robb'd him at once of his hopes and his life :
The Anglian lion, the terror of France,
Oft prowling, ensanguin'd the Tweed's silver flood ;
But, taught by the bright Caledonian lance,
He learn'd to fear in his own native wood.

The fell Harpy-raven took wing from the north,
The scourge of the seas, and the dread of the shore ;
The wild Scandinavian boar issued forth
To wanton in carnage and wallow in gore :

O'er countries and kingdoms their fury prevail'd,
 No arts could appease them, no arms could repel ;
 But brave Caledonia in vain they assal'd,
 As Largs well can witness, and Loncartie tell.

Thus bold, independent, unconquer'd, and free,
 Her bright course of glory for ever shall run :
 For brave Caledonia immortal must be ;
 I'll prove it from Euclid as clear as the sun :
 Rectangle-triangle, the figure we'll chuse :
 The upright is Chance, and old Time is the base ;
 But brave Caledonia's the hypothenuse ;
 Then, ergo, she'll match them, and match them always.

POEM ON PASTORAL POETRY.²⁰²

HAIL, Poesie ! thou Nymph reserv'd !
 In chase o' thee, what crowds hae swerv'd
 Frae common sense, or sunk enerv'd
 'Mang heaps o' clavers :
 And och ! o'er aft thy joes hae starv'd,
 'Mid a' thy favors !

Say, Lassie, why thy train amang,
 While loud the trump's heroic clang,
 And sock or buskin skelp alang
 To death or marriage ;
 Scarce ane has tried the shepherd-sang
 But wi' miscarriage ?

In Homer's craft Jock Milton thrives ;
 Æschylus' pen Will Shakespeare drives ;
 Wee Pope, the knurlin, till him rives
 Horatian fame ;
 In thy sweet sang, Barbauld, survives
 Even Sappho's flame.

But thee, Theocritus, wha matches?
They're no herd's ballats, Maro's catches;
Squire Pope but busks his skinklin patches
 O' heathen tatters:
I pass by hunders, nameless wretches,
 That ape their betters.

In this braw age o' wit and lear,
Will nane the Shepherd's whistle mair
Blaw sweetly in its native air,
 And rural grace;
And, wi' the far-fam'd Grecian, share
 A rival place?

Yes! there is ane; a Scottish callan!
There's ane; come forrit, honest Allan!
Thou need na jouk behint the hallan,
 A chiel sae clever;
The teeth o' time may gnaw Tantallan,
 But thou's for ever.

Thou paints auld Nature to the nines,
In thy sweet Caledonian lines;
Nae gowden stream thro' myrtles twines,
 Where Philomel,
While nightly breezes sweep the vines,
 Her griefs will tell!

In gowany glens thy burnie strays,
Where bonie lasses bleach their claes,
Or trots by hazelly shaws and braes,
 Wi' hawthorns gray,
Where blackbirds join the shepherd's lays,
 At close o' day.

Thy rural loves are Nature's sel' ;
Nae bombast spates o' nonsense swell ;
Nae snap conceits, but that sweet spell
 O' witchin love,
That charm that can the strongest quell,
 The sternest move.

VERSES ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WOODS
NEAR DRUMLANRIG.

As on the banks of winding Nith,
Ae smiling simmer morn I stray'd,
And traced its bonie holms and haughs,
Where linties sang and lammies play'd,
I sat me down upon a craig,
And drank my fill o' fancy's dream,
When from the eddying deep below,
Up rose the genius of the stream.

Dark, like the frowning rock, his brow,
And troubled, like his wintry wave,
And deep, as sughs the boding wind
Amang his caves, the sigh he gave—
“ And come ye here, my son,” he cried,
“ To wander in my birken shade ?
To muse some favourite Scottish theme,
Or sing some favourite Scottish maid ?

“ There was a time, it's nae lang syne,
Ye might hae seen me in my pride,
When a' my banks sae bravely saw
Their woody pictures in my tide ;
When hanging beech and spreading elm
Shaded my stream sae clear and cool :
And stately oaks their twisted arms
Threw broad and dark across the pool ;

"When, glinting thro' the trees, appear'd
 The wee white cot aboon the mill,
 And peacefu' rose its ingle reek,
 That, slowly curling, clamb the hill.
 But now the cot is bare and cauld,
 Its leafy bield for ever gane,
 And scarce a stunted birk is left
 To shiver in the blast its lane."

"Alas!" quoth I, "what ruefu' chance
 Has twin'd ye o' your stately trees?
 Has laid your rocky bosom bare—
 Has stripped the cleeding aff your braes?
 Was it the bitter eastern blast,
 That scatters blight in early spring?
 Or was 't the wil'fire scorch'd their boughs,
 Or canker-worm wi' secret sting?"

"Nae eastlin blast," the sprite replied;
 "It blows na here sae fierce and fell,
 And on my dry and halesome banks
 Nae canker-worms get leave to dwell:
 Man! cruel man!" the genius sigh'd—
 As through the cliffs he sank him down—
 "The worm that gnaw'd my bonie trees,
 That reptile wears a Ducal crown."

THE GALLANT WEAVER.

WHERE Cart rins rowin to the sea,
 By mony a flower and spreading tree,
 There lives a lad, the lad for me,
 He is a gallant Weaver.
 O I had wooers aught or nine,
 They gied me rings and ribbons fine;
 And I was fear'd my heart wad tine,
 And I gied it to the Weaver.

My daddie sign'd my tocher-band,
To gie the lad that has the land,
But to my heart I'll add my hand,
And give it to the Weaver.
While birds rejoice in leafy bowers,
While bees delight in opening flowers,
While corn grows green in summer showers,
I'll love my gallant Weaver.

EPIGRAM AT BROWNHILL INN.

AT Brownhill we always get dainty good cheer,
And plenty of bacon each day in the year;
We've a' thing that's nice, and mostly in season,
But why always Bacon—come tell me the reason?

YOU'RE WELCOME, WILLIE STEWART.²⁰³

Chorus.—You're welcome, Willie Stewart,
You're welcome, Willie Stewart,
There's ne'er a flower that blooms in May,
That's half sae welcome's thou art!

COME, bumpers high, express your joy,
The bowl we maun renew it,
The tappet hen, gae bring her ben,
To welcome Willie Stewart.
You're welcome, Willie Stewart, etc.

May foes be strang, and friends be slack,
Ilk action, may he rue it,
May woman on him turn her back
That wrangs thee, Willie Stewart!
You're welcome, Willie Stewart, etc.

LOVELY POLLY STEWART.²⁰⁴

Chorus.—O lovely Polly Stewart,
O charming Polly Stewart,
There's ne'er a flower that blooms in May,
That's half so fair as thou art!

THE flower it blows, it fades, it fa's,
And art can ne'er renew it;
But worth and truth, eternal youth
Will gie to Polly Stewart.
O lovely Polly Stewart, etc.

May he whase arms shall fauld thy charms
Possess a leal and true heart!
To him be given to ken the heaven
He grasps in Polly Stewart!
O lovely Polly Stewart, etc.

DAMON AND SYLVIA.

Tune—"The Tither Morn."

YON wandering rill that marks the hill,
And glances o'er the brae, Sir,
Slides by a bower, where mony a flower
Sheds fragrance on the day, Sir;
There Damon lay with Sylvia gay,
To love they thought no crime, Sir,
The wild birds sang, the echoes rang,
While Damon's heart beat time, Sir.

COCK UP YOUR BEAVER.²⁰⁵

WHEN first my brave Johnie lad came to the town,
He had a blue bonnet that wanted the crown;
But now he has gotten a hat and a feather,
Hey, brave Johnie lad, cock up your beaver!

Cock up your beaver, and cock it fu' sprush,
We'll over the border and gie them a brush ;
There's somebody there we'll teach better behaviour,
Hey, brave Johnie lad, cock up your beaver !

MY EPPIE MACNAB.

O SAW ye my dearie, my Eppie Macnab ?
O saw ye my dearie, my Eppie Macnab ?
She's down in the yard, she's kissin the laird,
She winna come hame to her ain Jock Rab.

O come thy ways to me, my Eppie Macnab ;
O come thy ways to me, my Eppie Macnab ;
Whate'er thou hast dune, be it late, be it sune,
Thou's welcome again to thy ain Jock Rab.

What says she, my dearie, my Eppie Macnab ?
What says she, my dearie, my Eppie Macnab ?
She let's thee to wit that she has thee forgot,
And forever disowns thee, her ain Jock Rab.

O had I ne'er seen thee, my Eppie Macnab !
O had I ne'er seen thee, my Eppie Macnab !
As light as the air, and as fause as thou's fair,
Thou's broken the heart o' thy ain Jock Rab.

ALTHO' HE HAS LEFT ME.

ALTHO' he has left me for greed o' the siller,
I dinna envy him the gains he can win ;
I rather wad bear a' the lade o' my sorrow,
Than ever hae acted sae faithless to him.

MY TOCHER'S THE JEWEL.²⁰⁶

O MEIKLE thinks my luve o' my beauty,
 And meikle thinks my luve o' my kin,
 But little thinks my luve I ken brawlie
 My tocher's the jewel has charms for him.
 It's a' for the apple he'll nourish the tree,
 It's a' for the hiney he'll ch' rish the bee,
 My laddie's sae meikle in luve wi' the siller,
 He canna hae luve to spare for me.

Your proffer o' luve's an airle-penny,
 My tocher's the bargain ye wad buy;
 But an ye be crafty, I am cunnin,
 Sae ye wi' anither your fortune may try.
 Ye're like to the timmer o' yon rotten wood,
 Ye're like to the bark o' yon rotten tree,
 Ye'll slip frae me like a knotless thread,
 And ye'll crack your credit wi' mair nor me.

O FOR ANE AN' TWENTY, TAM.

Chorus.—An' O for ane an' twenty, Tam!
 And hey, sweet ane an' twenty, Tam!
 I'll learn my kin a rattlin sang,
 An' I saw ane an' twenty, Tam.

THEY snool me sair, and haud me down,
 An' gar me look like bluntie, Tam;
 But three short years will soon wheel roun',
 An' then comes ane an' twenty, Tam.
 An' O for, etc.

A glieb o' lan', a claut o' gear,
 Was left me by my Auntie, Tam;
 At kith or kin I need na spier,
 An' I saw ane an' twenty, Tam.
 An' O for, etc.

They'll hae me wed a wealthy coof,
Tho' I mysel' hae plenty, Tam ;
But hear'st thou, laddie! there's my loof,
I'm thine at ane an' twenty, Tam.
An' O for, etc.

THOU FAIR ELIZA.²⁰⁷

TURN again, thou fair Eliza!
Ae kind blink before we part ;
Rew on thy despairing lover,
Canst thou break his faithfu' heart ?
Turn again, thou fair Eliza!
If to love thy heart denies,
Oh, in pity hide the sentence
Under friendship's kind disguise!

Thee, sweet maid, hae I offended ?
My offence is loving thee ;
Canst thou wreck his peace for ever,
Wha for thine would gladly die ?
While the life beats in my bosom,
Thou shalt mix in ilka throe :
Turn again, thou lovely maiden,
Ae sweet smile on me bestow.

Not the bee upon the blossom,
In the pride o' sinny noon ;
Not the little sporting fairy,
All beneath the simmer moon ;
Not the Minstrel, in the moment
Fancy lightens in his e'e,
Kens the pleasure, feels the rapture,
That thy presence gies to me.

MY BONIE BELL.

THE smiling Spring comes in rejoicing,
And surly Winter grimly flies ;
Now crystal clear are the falling waters,
And bonie blue are the sunny skies.
Fresh o'er the mountains breaks forth the morning,
The ev'ning gilds the ocean's swell ;
All creatures joy in the sun's returning,
And I rejoice in my Bonie Bell.

The flowery Spring leads sunny Summer,
The yellow Autumn presses near ,
Then in his turn comes gloomy Winter,
Till smiling Spring again appear :
Thus seasons dancing, life advancing,
Old Time and Nature their changes tell ;
But never ranging, still unchanging,
I adore my Bonie Bell.

SWEET AFTON.²⁰⁸

" I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not, nor awake my love—my dove, my undefiled ! The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of the birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

FLOW gently, sweet Afton ! among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise ;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Thou stock dove whose echo resounds thro' the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds, in yon thorny den,
Thou green crested lapwing thy screaming forbear,
I charge you, disturb not my slumbering Fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring hills,
Far mark'd with the courses of clear, winding rills ;
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where, wild in the woodlands, the primroses blow ;
There oft, as mild Ev'ning weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides ;
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As, gathering sweet flowerets, she stems thy clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, amang thy green braes,
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays ;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

ADDRESS TO THE SHADE OF THOMSON,
ON CROWNING HIS BUST AT EDNAM, ROXBURGHSHIRE, WITH A
WREATH OF BAYS.

WHILE virgin Spring by Eden's flood,
Unfolds her tender mantle green,
Or pranks the sod in frolic mood,
Or tunes Eolian strains between.

While Summer, with a matron grace,
Retreats to Dryburgh's cooling shade,
Yet oft, delighted, stops to trace
The progress of the spikey blade.

While Autumn, benefactor kind,
By Tweed erects his aged head,
And sees, with self-approving mind,
Each creature on his bounty fed.

While maniac Winter rages o'er
The hills whence classic Yarrow flows,
Rousing the turbid torrent's roar,
Or sweeping, wild, a waste of snows.

So long, sweet Poet of the year!
 Shall bloom that wreath thou well hast won ;
 While Scotia, with exulting tear,
 Proclaims that THOMSON is her son.

NITHSDALE'S WELCOME HAME.²⁰⁹

THE noble Maxwells and their powers
 Are coming o'er the border,
 And they'll gae big 'Terreagles' towers,
 And set them a' in order.
 And they declare 'Terreagles' fair,
 For their abode they choose it ;
 There's no a heart in a' the land
 But's lighter at the news o't.

Tho' stars in skies may disappear,
 And angry tempests gather ;
 The happy hour may soon be near
 That brings us pleasant weather :
 The weary night o' care and grief
 May hae a joyfu' morrow ;
 So dawning day has brought relief,
 Fareweel our night o' sorrow.

FRAE THE FRIENDS AND LAND I LOVE.

FRAE the friends and land I love,
 Driv'n by Fortune's felly spite ;
 Frae my best belov'd I rove,
 Never mair to taste delight :
 Never mair maun hope to find
 Ease frae toil, relief frae care ;
 When Remembrance wracks the mind,
 Pleasures but unveil despair.

Brightest climes shall mirk appear,
 Desert ilka blooming shore,
 Till the Fates, nae mair severe,
 Friendship, love, and peace restore.
 Till Revenge, wi' laurel'd head,
 Bring our banished hame again ;
 And ilk loyal, bome lad
 Cross the seas, and win his ain.

SUCH A PARCEL OF ROGUES IN A NATION.²¹⁰

FAREWHEEL to a' our Scottish fame,
 Fareweel our ancient glory ;
 Fareweel ev'n to the Scottish name,
 Sae fam'd in martial story.
 Now Sark rins over Solway sands,
 An' Tweed rins to the ocean,
 To mark where England's province stands—
 Such a parcel of rogues in a nation !

What force or guile could not subdue,
 Thro' many warlike ages,
 Is wrought now by a coward few,
 For hireling traitor's wages.
 The English steel we could disdain,
 Secure in valour's station ;
 But English gold has been our bane—
 Such a parcel of rogues in a nation !

O would, ere I had seen the day
 That Treason thus could sell us,
 My auld grey head had lien in clay,
 Wi' Bruce and loyal Wallace !
 But pith and power, till my last hour,
 I'll mak this declaration ;
 We're bought and sold for English gold—
 Such a parcel of rogues in a nation !

YE JACOBITES BY NAME.

Ye Jacobites by name, give an ear, give an ear,
Ye Jacobites by name, give an ear,
 Ye Jacobites by name,
 Your fautes I will proclaim,
Your doctrines I maun blame, you shall hear.

What is Right, and what is Wrang, by the law, by the law
What is Right, and what is Wrang, by the law?
 What is Right, and what is Wrang?
 A short sword, and a lang,
A weak arm and a strang, for to draw.

What makes heroic strife, famed afar, famed afar ?
What makes heroic strife, famed afar ?
 What makes heroic strife ?
 To whet th' assassin's knife,
Or hunt a Parent's life, wi' bluidy war ?

Then let your schemes alone, in the state, in the state,
Then let your schemes alone, in the state.
 Then let your schemes alone,
 Adore the rising sun,
And leave a man undone, to his fate.

I HAE BEEN AT CROOKIEDEN.

I HAE been at Crookieden,
 My bonie laddie, Highland laddie,
Viewing Willie and his men,
 My bonie laddie, Highland laddie.
There our foes that burnt and slew,
 My bonie laddie, Highland laddie.
There, at last, they gat their due,
 My bonie laddie, Highland laddie.

Satan sits in his black neuk,
 My bonie laddie, Highland laddie,
 Breaking sticks to roast the Duke,
 My bonie laddie, Highland laddie.
 The bloody monster gae a yell,
 My bonie laddie, Highland laddie,
 And loud the laugh gied round a' hell,
 My bonie laddie, Highland laddie.

KENMURE'S ON AND AWA', WILLIE.²¹¹

O KENMURE'S on and awa', Willie,
 O Kenmure's on and awa' ;
 An' Kenmure's lord's the bravest lord
 That ever Galloway saw.
 Success to Kenmure's band, Willie!
 Success to Kenmure's band!
 There's no a heart that fears a Whig,
 That rides by Kenmure's hand.

Here's Kenmure's health in wine, Willie!
 Here's Kenmure's health in wine!
 There's ne'er a coward o' Kenmure's blude,
 Nor yet o' Gordon's line.
 O Kenmure's lads are men, Willie,
 O Kenmure's lads are men ;
 Their hearts and swords are metal true,
 And that their foes shall ken.

They'll live or die wi' fame, Willie,
 They'll live or die wi' fame ,
 But sune, wi' sounding victorie,
 May Kenmure's lord come hame !
 Here's him that's far awa', Willie!
 Here's him that's far awa'!
 And here's the flower that I lo'e best,
 The rose that's like the snaw.

EPISTLE TO JOHN MAXWELL, ESQ., OF
TERRAUGHTY,²¹²

ON HIS SEVENTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY.

HEALTH to the Maxwell's veteran Chief!
Health, ay unsour'd by care or grief:
Inspir'd, I turn'd Fate's sibyl leaf,
 This natal morn,
I see thy life is stuff o' prief,
 Scarce quite half-worn.

This day thou metes threescore eleven,
And I can tell that bounteous Heaven,
(The second-sight, ye ken, is given
 To ilka Poet)
On thee a tack o' seven times seven
 Will yet bestow it.

If envious buckies view wi' sorrow
Thy lengthen'd days on this blest morrow,
May Desolation's lang-teeth'd harrow,
 Nine miles an hour,
Rake them, like Sodom and Gomorrah,
 In brunstane stoure.

But for thy friends, and they are mony,
Baith honest men, and lasses bonie,
May couthie Fortune, kind and cannie,
 In social glee,
Wi' mornings blythe, and e'enings funny,
 Bless them and thee!

Fareweel, auld birkie! Lord be near ye,
And then the deil, he daurna steer ye:
Your friends ay love, your faes ay fear ye;
 For me, shame fa' me,
If neist my heart I dinna wear ye,
 While BURNS they ca' me.

SECOND EPISTLE TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ., OF
FINTRY.

OCTOBER 5, 1791.

LATE crippl'd of an arm, and now a leg,
About to beg a pass for leave to beg ;
Dull, listless, teas'd, dejected, and deprest
(Nature is adverse to a cripple's rest) ;
Will generous Graham list to his Poet's wail ?
(It soothes poor Misery, hearkening to her tale)
And hear him curse the light he first survey'd,
And doubly curse the luckless rhyming trade ?

Thou, Nature ! partial Nature, I arraign ;
Of thy caprice maternal I complain :
The lion and the bull thy care have found,
One shakes the forests, and one spurns the ground ;
Thou giv'st the ass his hide, the snail his shell ;
Th' envenom'd wasp, victorious, guards his cell ;
Thy minions kings defend, control, devour,
In all th' omnipotence of rule and power ;
Foxes and statesmen subtle wiles ensure ;
The cit and polecat stink, and are secure ;
Toads with their poison, doctors with their drug,
The priest and hedgehog in their robes, are snug ;
Ev'n silly woman has her warlike arts,
Her tongue and eyes—her dreaded spear and darts.

But oh ! thou bitter step-mother and hard,
To thy poor, fenceless, naked child—the Bard !
A thing unteachable in world's skill,
And half an idiot too, more helpless still :
No heels to bear him from the op'ning dun ;
No claws to dig, his hated sight to shun ;
No horns, but those by luckless Hymen worn,
And those, alas ! not, Amalthea's horn :
No nerves olfact'ry, Mammon's trusty cur,

Clad in rich Dulness' comfortable fur ;
In naked feeling, and in aching pride,
He bears th' unbroken blast from ev'ry side :
Vampyre booksellers drain him to the heart,
And scorpion critics cureless venom dart :

Critics—appall'd, I venture on the name ;
Those cut-throat bandits in the paths of fame :
Bloody dissectors, worse than ten Monroes ;
He hacks to teach, they mangle to expose :

His heart by causeless wanton malice wrung,
By blockheads' daring into madness stung ;
His well-won bays, than life itself more dear,
By miscreants torn, who ne'er one sprig must wear ;
Foil'd, bleeding, tortur'd in th' unequal strife,
The hapless Poet flounders on thro' life :
Till, fled each hope that once his bosom fir'd,
And fled each muse that glorious once inspir'd,
Low sunk in squalid, unprotected age,
Dead even resentment for his injur'd page,
He heeds or feels no more the ruthless critic's rage !
So, by some hedge, the gen'rous steed deceas'd,
For half-starv'd snarling curs a dainty feast ;
By toil and famine wore to skin and bone,
Lies, senseless of each tugging bitch's son.

O Dulness ! portion of the truly blest !
Calm shelter'd haven of eternal rest !
Thy sons ne'er madden in the fierce extremes
Of Fortune's polar frost, or torrid beams
If mantling high she fills the golden cup,
With sober selfish ease they sip it up ;
Conscious the bounteous meed they well deserve,
They only wonder " some folks " do not starve.
The grave sage hern thus easy picks his frog,
And thinks the mallard a sad worthless dog.

When disappointment snaps the clue of hope,
 And thro' disastrous night they darkling grope,
 With deaf endurance sluggishly they bear,
 And just conclude "that fools are fortune's care."
 So, heavy, passive to the tempest's shocks,
 Strong on the sign-post stands the stupid ox.

Not so the idle Muses' mad-cap train,
 Not such the workings of their moon-struck brain;
 In equanimity they never dwell.
 By turns in soaring heav'n, or vaulted hell.

I dread thee, Fate, relentless and severe,
 With all a poet's, husband's, father's fear!
 Already one strong hold of hope is lost—
 Glencairn, the truly noble, lies in dust
 (Fled, like the sun eclips'd as noon appears,
 And left us darkling in a world of tears);
 O! hear my ardent, grateful, selfish pray'r!
 Fintry, my other stay, long bless and spare!
 Thro' a long life his hopes and wishes drown,
 And bright in cloudless skies his sun go down!
 May bliss domestic smooth his private path;
 Give energy to life; and soothe his latest breath,
 With many a filial tear circling the bed of death!

THE SONG OF DEATH.²¹³

Scene.—A Field of Battle—Time of the day, evening—The wounded and dying of the victorious army are supposed to join in the following song.

FAREWELL, thou fair day, thou green earth and ye skies,
 Now gay with the broad setting sun;
 Farewell, loves and friendships, ye dear tender ties,
 Our race of existence is run!
 Thou grim King of Terrors; thou Life's gloomy foe!
 Go, frighten the coward and slave;
 Go, teach them to tremble, fell tyrant! but know
 No terrors hast thou to the brave!

Thou strik'st the dull peasant—he sinks in the dark,
 Nor saves e'en the wreck of a name ;
 Thou strik'st the young hero—a glorious mark ;
 He falls in the blaze of his fame !
 In the field of proud honor—our swords in our hands,
 Our king and our country to save ;
 While victory shines on Life's last ebbing sands,—
 O who would not die with the brave ?

POEM ON SENSIBILITY.²¹⁴

SENSIBILITY, how charming,
 Dearest Nancy, thou canst tell ;
 But distress, with horrors arming,
 Thou alas! hast known too well !

Fairest flower, behold the lily
 Blooming in the sunny ray ;
 Let the blast sweep o'er the valley,
 See it prostrate in the clay.

Hear the woodlark charm the forest,
 Telling o'er his little joys ;
 But alas! a prey the surest
 To each pirate of the skies.

Dearly bought the hidden treasure
 Finer feelings can bestow :
 Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure,
 Thrill the deepest notes of woe.

VERSICLES.

THE TOADEATER.

OF Lordly acquaintance you boast,
 And the Dukes that you dined with yestreen ;
 Why, an insect's an insect at most,
 Tho' it crawl on the curl of a Queen !

IN THE KIRK OF LAMINGTON.

AS cauld a wind as ever blew,
 A caulder kirk, and in't but few :
 A caulder Preacher never spak—
 Ye'se a' be het or I come back.

THE KEEKIN GLASS.²¹⁵

How daur ye ca' me "Howlet-face?"
 Ye blear-e'd, withered spectre!
 Ye only spied the keekin-glass,
 An there ye saw your picture.

A GRACE BEFORE DINNER—EXTEMPORE.

O THOU who kindly dost provide
 For every creature's want!
 We bless Thee, God of Nature wide,
 For all Thy goodness lent :

And if it please Thee, heavenly Guide,
 May never worse be sent ;
 But, whether granted or denied,
 Lord, bless us with content. Amen!

A GRACE AFTER DINNER—EXTEMPORE.

O THOU, in whom we live and move—
 Who made the sea and shore ;
 Thy goodness constantly we prove,
 And, grateful, would adore :

And, if it please Thee, Power above!
 Still grant us, with such store,
 The friend we trust, the fair we love—
 And we desire no more. Amen!

THE DEAREST O' THE QUORUM.²¹⁶

O MAY, thy morn was ne'er sae sweet
As the mirk night o' December!
For sparkling was the rosy wine,
And private was the chamber:
And dear was she I dare na name,
But I will ay remember:
And dear was she I dare na name,
But I will ay remember.

And here's to them that, like oursel,
Can push about the jorum!
And here's to them that wish us weel,
May a' that's gude watch o'er 'em!
And here's to them, we dare na tell,
The dearest o' the quorum!
And here's to them, we dare na tell,
The dearest o' the quorum.

PARTING SONG TO CLARINDA.²¹⁷

Æ fond kiss, and then we sever;
Æ farewell, and then forever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.
Who shall say that Fortune grieves him,
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerful twinkle lights me;
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy:
But to see her was to love her;
Love but her, and love for ever.

Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare-thee-weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare-thee-weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, Enjoyment, Love and Pleasure!
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!
Ae farewell, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

BEHOLD THE HOUR, THE BOAT, ARRIVE.²¹⁸

BEHOLD the hour, the boat, arrive!
My dearest Nancy, O fareweel!
Severed frae thee, can I survive,
Frae thee whom I hae lov'd sae weel?

Endless and deep shall be my grief;
Nae ray of comfort shall I see,
But this most precious, dear belief,
That thou wilt still remember me!

Alang the solitary shore
Where flitting sea-fowl round me cry,
Across the rolling, dashing roar,
I'll westward turn my wishful eye.

"Happy thou Indian grove," I'll say,
"Where now my Nancy's path shall be!
While thro' your sweets she holds her way,
O tell me, does she muse on me?"

THOU GLOOMY DECEMBER.

ANCE mair I hail thee, thou gloomy December!

Ance mair I hail thee wi' sorrow and care ;
Sad was the parting thou makes me remember
Parting wi' Nancy, oh, ne'er to meet mair!

Fond lovers' parting is sweet, painful pleasure,
Hope beaming mild on the soft parting hour ;
But the dire feeling, O farewell for ever !
Anguish unmingled, and agony pure !

Wild as the winter now tearing the forest,
Till the last leaf o' the summer is flown,
Such is the tempest has shaken my bosom,
Till my last hope and last comfort is gone.

Still as I hail thee, thou gloomy December,
Still shall I hail thee wi' sorrow and care ;
For sad was the parting thou makes me remember,
Parting wi' Nancy, oh, ne'er to meet mair.

MY NATIVE 'LAND SAE FAR AWA'.

O SAD and heavy, should I part,
But for her sake sae far awa' ;
Unknowing what my way may thwart,
My native land sae far awa'.

Thou that of a' things Maker art,
That formed this Fair sae far awa',
Gie body strength, then I'll ne'er start,
At this my way sae far awa'.

How true is love to pure desert !
Like mine for her sae far awa' ;
And nocht shall heal my bosom's smart,
While, oh, she is sae far awa' !

Nane other love, nane other dart,
I feel but hers sae far awa' ;
But fairer never touch'd a heart
Than hers, the Fair, sae far awa'.

DOWN THE BURN, DAVIE.²¹⁹

As down the burn they took their way,
And thro' the flowery dale,
His cheek to hers he aft did lay,
And love was ay the tale :
With " Mary, when shall we return,
Sic pleasures to renew ' "

Quoth Mary—" Love, I like the burn,
And ay shall follow you."

LINES ON FERGUSSON, THE POET.

ILL-FATED genius! Heaven-taught Fergusson,
What heart that feels and will not yield a tear,
To think Life's sun did set e'er well begun
To shed its influence on thy bright career.

O why should truest Worth and Genius pine
Beneath the iron grasp of Want and Woe,
While titled knaves and idiot-Greatness shine
In all the splendour Fortune can bestow ?

I DO CONFESS THOU ART SAE FAIR.²²⁰

I DO confess thou art sae fair,
I wad been o'er the lugs in luve,
Had I na found the slightest prayer
That lips could speak thy heart could muve :

I do confess thee sweet, but find
Thou art so thriftless o' thy sweets,
Thy favours are the silly wind
That kisses ilka thing it meets.

See yonder rosebud, rich in dew,
Amang its native briers sae coy ;
How sune it tines its scent and hue,
When pu'd and worn a common toy ;

Sic fate ere lang shall thee betide,
Tho' thou may gaily bloom awhile ;
And sune thou shalt be thrown aside,
Like ony common weed and vile.

THE WEARY PUND O' TOW.

Chorus.—The weary pund, the weary pund,
The weary pund o' tow ;
I think my wife will end her life,
Before she spin her tow.

I BOUGHT my wife a stane o' lint,
As gude as e'er did grow,
And a' that she has made o' that
Is ae puir pund o' tow.
The weary pund, etc.

There sat a bottle in a bole,
Ayont the ingle low ;
And aye she took the tither souk,
To drouk the stourie tow.
The weary pund, etc.

Quoth I, for shame, ye dirty dame,
Gae spin your tap o' tow !
She took the rock, and wi' a knock,
She brake it o'er my pow.
The weary pund, etc.

At last her feet—I sang to see't!
 Gaed foremost o'er the knowe,
 And or I wad anither jad,
 I'll wallop in a tow.
 The weary pund, etc.

WHEN SHE CAM' BEN SHE BOBBET.²²¹

O WHEN she cam' ben she bobbet fu' low,
 O when she cam' ben she bobbet fu' low,
 And when she cam' ben, she kiss'd Cockpen,
 And syne she deny'd she did it ava.

And was na Cockpen right saucy witha'?
 And was na Cockpen right saucy witha'?
 In leaving the daughter o' a lord,
 And kissin' a collier lassie an' a'!

O never look down, my lassie, at a',
 O never look down, my lassie, at a',
 Thy lips are as sweet, and thy figure complete,
 As the finest dame in castle or ha'.

Tho' thou hast nae silk, and holland sae sma',
 Tho' thou hast nae silk, and holland sae sma',
 Thy coat and thy sark are thy ain handywark,
 And lady Jean was never sae braw.

SCROGGAM, MY DEARIE.

THERE was a wife wonn'd in Cockpen,
 Scroggam;
 She brew'd gude ale for gentlemen;
 Sing auld Cowl, lay ye down by me,
 Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum.

The gudewife's dochter fell in a fever,
Scroggan ;
The priest o' the parish he fell in anither ;
Sing auld Cowl, lay ye down by me,
Scroggan, my dearie, ruffum.

They laid them side by side thegither,
Scroggan ;
That the heat o' the taen might cool the tither ;
Sing auld Cowl, lay ye down by me,
Scroggan, my dearie, ruffum.

MY COLLIER LADDIE.²²²

WHARE live ye, my bonie lass ?
And tell me what they ca' ye ;
My name, she says, is mistress Jean,
And I follow the Collier laddie.
My name, she says, etc.

See you not yon hills and dales
The sun shines on sae brawlie ;
They a' are mine, and they shall be thine,
Gin ye'll leave your Collier laddie.
They a' are mine, etc.

Ye shall gang in gay attire,
Weel buskit up sae gaudy ;
And ane to wait on every hand,
Gin ye'll leave your Collier laddie.
And ane to wait, etc.

Tho' ye had a' the sun shines on,
And the earth conceals sae lowly,
I wad turn my back on you and it a',
And embrace my Collier laddie.
I wad turn my back, etc.

I can win my five pennies in a day,
 An' spend it at night fu' brawlie ;
 And make my bed in the collier's neuk,
 And lie down wi' my Collier laddie.
 And make my bed, etc.

Loove for loove is the bargain for me,
 Tho' the wee cot-house should haud me ;
 And the warld before me to win my bread,
 And fair fa' my Collier laddie !
 And the warld before me, etc.

SIC A WIFE AS WILLIE HAD.²²³

WILLIE WASTLE dwalt on Tweed,
 The spot they ca'd it Linkumdoddie :
 Willie was a wabster gude,
 Couldstown a clue wi' ony body :
 He had a wife was dour and din,
 O Tinkler Maidgie was her mither ;
 Sic a wife as Willie had,
 I wad na gie a button for her.

She has an e'e, she has but ane,
 The cat has twa the very colour ;
 Five rusty teeth, forbye a stump,
 A clapper tongue wad deave a miller ;
 A whiskin beard about her mou,
 Her nose and chin they threaten ither ;
 Sic a wife as Willie had,
 I wad na gie a button for her.

She's bow-hough'd, she's hen-shin'd,
 Ae limpin leg a hand-breed shorter ;
 She's twisted right, she's twisted left,
 To balance fair in ilka quarter :

She has a hump upon her breast,
The twin o' that upon her shouther ;
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wad na gie a button for her.

Auld baudrons by the ingle sits
An' wi' her loof her face a-washin ;
But Willie's wife is nae sae trig,
She dights her grunzie wi' a hushion :
Her walie nieves like midden-creels,
Her face wad fyle the Logan Water ;
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wad na gie a button for her.

LADY MARY ANN.²²⁴

O LADY MARY ANN looks o'er the Castle wa,
She saw three bonie boys playing at the ba',
The youngest he was the flower amang them a',
My bonie laddie's young, but he's growin' yet.

O father, O father, an ye think it fit,
We'll send him a year to the college yet,
We'll sew a green ribbon round about his hat,
And that will let them ken he's to marry yet.

Lady Mary Ann was a flower in the dew,
Sweet was its smell and bonie was its hue,
And the langer it blossom'd the sweeter it grew,
For the lily in the bud will be bonier yet.

Young Charlie Cochran was the sprout of an aik,
Bonie and bloomin' and straught was its make,
The sun took delight to shine for its sake,
And it will be the brag o' the forest yet.

The simmer is gane when the leaves they were green,
And the days are awa' that we hae seen,
But far better days I trust will come again ;
For my bonie laddie's young, but he's growin' yet

KELLY BURN BRAES.

THERE leevit a carl in Kelly Burn Braes,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme ;
And he had a wife was the plague o' his days,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

Ae day as the carl gaed up the lang glen,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme ;
He met wi' the Deil, wha said, " How do you fen ? "
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

" I've got a bad wife, sir, that's a' my complaint,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme ;
For, saving your presence, to her ye're a saint,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

" It's neither your stot nor your staig I shall crave,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme ;
But gie me your wife, man, for her I must have,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

" O welcome most kindly!" the blythe carl said,
" Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme ;
But if ye can match her ye're waur than ye're ca'd,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

The Devil has got the auld wife on his back,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme ;
And like a poor pedlar he's carried his pack,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

He's carried her hame to his ain hallan door,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme ;
Syn'e bade her gae in for a b—, and a w—,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

Then straight he makes fifty, the pick o' his band,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme ;
Turn out on her guard in the clap o' a hand,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

The carlin gaed thro' them like ony wud bear,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme ;
Whae'er she gat hands on cam' ne'er her nae mair,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

A reekit wee deevil looks over the wa',
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme ;
"O help, maister, help, or she'll ruin us a'!"
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

The Devil he swore by the edge o' his knife,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme ;
He pitied the man that was tied to a wife,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

The Devil he swore by the kirk and the bell,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme ;
He was not in wedlock, thank Heav'n, but in hell,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

Then Satan has travell'd again wi' his pack,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme ;
And to her auld husband he's carried her back,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

"I hae been a Deevil the feck o' my life,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme ;
But ne'er was in hell till I met wi' a wife,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

THE SLAVE'S LAMENT.

It was in sweet Senegal that my foes did me enthrall,
 For the lands of Virginia, ginia O :
 Torn from that lovely shore, and must never see it more ;
 And alas ! I am weary, weary O :
 Torn from that lovely shore, and must never see it more ;
 And alas ! I am weary, weary O.

All on that charming coast is no bitter snow and frost,
 Like the lands of Virginia, ginia O :
There streams for ever flow, and flowers for ever blow,
 And alas ! I am weary, weary O :
There streams for ever flow, and flowers for ever blow,
 And alas ! I am weary, weary O.

The burden I must bear, while the cruel scourge I fear,
 In the lands of Virginia, ginia O ,
 And I think on friends most dear, with the bitter, bitter tear,
 And alas ! I am weary, weary O :
 And I think on friends most dear, with the bitter, bitter tear,
 And alas ! I am weary, weary O.

O CAN YE LABOUR LEA ?

Chorus.—O can ye labour lea, young man,
 O can ye labour lea ?
 It fee nor bountith shall us twine
 Gin ye can labour lea.

I FEE'D a man at Michaelmas,
 Wi' airle pennies three ;
 But a' the faut I had to him,
 He could na labour lea.
 O can ye labour lea, etc.

O clappin's gude in Febarwar,
 An' kissin's sweet in May;
 But my delight's the ploughman lad,
 That weel can labour lea.
 O can ye labour lea, etc.

O kissin is the key o' luv,
 And clappin is the lock;
 An' makin o's the best thing yet,
 That e'er a young thing gat.
 O can ye labour lea, etc.

THE DEUK'S DANG O'ER MY DADDIE.

THE bairns gat out wi' an unco shout,
 The deuk's dang o'er my daddie, O!
 The fien-ma-care, quo' the feirrie auld wife,
 He was but a paidlin body, O!
 He paidles out, and he paidles in,
 An' he paidles late and early, O!
 This seven lang years I hae lien by his side,
 An' he is but a fusionless carlie, O.

O haud your tongue, my feirrie auld wife,
 O haud your tongue, now Nansie, O:
 I've seen the day, and sae hae ye,
 Ye wad na been sae donsie, O.
 I've seen the day ye butter'd my brose,
 And cuddl'd me late and early, O;
 But downa-do's come o'er me now,
 And och, I find it sairly, O!

THE DEIL'S AWA' WI' TH' EXCISEMAN.²²⁶

THE deil cam fiddlin thro' the town,
 And danc'd awa' wi' th' Exciseman,
 And ilka wife cries, "Auld Mahoun,
 I wish you luck o' the prize, man."

Chorus.—The deil's awa', the deil's awa',
 The deil's awa' wi' th' Exciseman,
 He's danc'd awa', he's danc'd awa',
 He's danc'd awa' wi' th' Exciseman.

We'll mak our maut, and we'll brew our drink,
 We'll laugh, sing, and rejoice, man,
 And mony braw thanks to the meikle black deil,
 That danc'd awa' wi' th' Exciseman.
 The deil's awa, etc.

There's threesome reels, there's foursome reels,
 There's hornpipes and strathspeys, man,
 But the ae best dance e'er cam to the land
 Was the deil's awa' wi' th' Exciseman.
 The deil's awa, etc.

THE COUNTRY LASS.

IN simmer, when the hay was mawn,
 And corn wav'd green in ilka field,
 While claver blooms white o'er the lea
 And roses blaw in ilka bield!
 Blythe Bessie in the milking shiel,
 Says—I'll be wed, come o't what will :
 Out spake a dame in wrinkled eild—
 O' gude advisement comes nae ill.

It's ye hae woovers mony ane,
 And lassie, ye're but young, ye ken ;
 Then wait a wee, and cannie wale
 A routhie butt, a routhie ben ;
 There's Johnie o' the Buskie-glen,
 Fu' is his barn, fu' is his byre ;
 Tak this frae me, my bonie hen,
 It's plenty beets the luvver's fire.

For Johnie o' the Buskie-glen,
 I dinna care a single flie ;
 He lo'es sae weel his craps and kye,
 He has nae luvè, to spare for me ;
 But blythe's the blink o' Robie's e'e,
 And weel I wat he lo'es me dear :
 Ae blink o' him I wad na gie
 For Buskie-glen and a' his gear.

O thoughtless lassie, life's a faught ;
 The canniest gate, the strife is sair ;
 But ay fu'-han't is fechtin best,
 A hungry care's an unco care :
 But some will spend and some will spare,
 An' wilfu' folk maun hae their will ;
 Syne as ye brew, my maiden fair,
 Keep mind that ye maun drink the yill.

O gear will buy me rigs o' land,
 And gear will buy me sheep and kye ;
 But the tender heart o' leesome luvè,
 The gowd and siller canna buy ;
 We may be poor—Robie and I—
 Light is the burden luvè lays on ;
 Content and luvè brings peace and joy—
 What mair hae Queens upon a throne ?

BESSY AND HER SPINNIN-WHEEL.

O LEEZE me on my spinnin-wheel,
 And leeze me on my rock and reel ;
 Frae tap to tae that cleeds me bien,
 And haps me biel and warm at e'en,
 I'll set me down and sing and spin,
 While laigh descends the simmer sun,
 Blest wi' content, and milk and meal,
 O leeze me on my spinnin-wheel.

On ilka hand the burnies trot,
 And meet below my theekit cot ;
 The scented birk and hawthorn white,
 Across the pool their arms unite,
 Alike to screen the birdie's nest,
 And little fishes' caller rest ;
 The sun blinks kindly in the biel',
 Where blythe I turn my spinnin-wheel.

On lofty aiks the cushats wail,
 And Echo cons the doolfu' tale ;
 The lintwhites in the hazel braes,
 Delighted, rival ither's lays ;
 The craik amang the claver hay,
 The pairtrick whirrin o'er the ley,
 The swallow jinkin round my shiel,
 Amuse me at my spinnin-wheel.

Wi' sma' to sell and less to buy,
 Aboon distress, below envy,
 O wha wad leave this humble state,
 For a' the pride of a' the great ?
 Amid their flairing, idle toys,
 Amid their cumbrous, dinsome joys,
 Can they the peace and pleasure feel
 Of Bessy at her spinnin-wheel ?

FRAGMENTS OF SONG.

No cold approach, no altered mien,
 Just what would make suspicion start ;
 No pause the dire extremes between,
 He made me blest—and broke my heart.

LOVE FOR LOVE.

ITHERS seek they ken na what,
 Features, carriage, and a' that ;
 Gie me loove in her I court,
 Loove to loove maks a' the sport.

Let loove sparkle in her e'e ;
Let her lo'e nae man but me ;
That's the tocher gude I prize,
There the luvver's treasure lies.

FRAGMENT ON MARIA.²²⁶

How gracefully Maria leads the dance !
She's life itself : I never saw a foot
So nimble and so elegant. It speaks,
And the sweet whispering Poetry it makes
Shames the musician.

Adriano, or, The first of June.

SAW YE BONIE LESLEY.²²⁷

O SAW ye bonie Lesley,
As she gaed o'er the Border ?
She's gane, like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther.

To see her is to love her,
And love but her for ever ;
For Nature made her what she is,
And never made anither !

Thou art a queen, fair Lesley,
Thy subjects, we before thee ;
Thou art divine, fair Lesley,
The hearts o' men adore thee.

The deil he could na scaith thee,
Or aught that wad belang thee ;
He'd look into thy bonie face,
And say—" I canna wrang thee !"

The Powers aboon will tent thee,
Misfortune sha'na steer thee ;
Thou'rt like themsel' sae lovely,
That ill they'll ne'er let near thee.

Return again, fair Lesley,
Return to Caledonie!
That we may brag we hae a lass
There's nane again sae bonie.

THE LEA-RIG.²²⁸

WHEN o'er the hill the e'ening star
Tells bughtin time is near, my jo,
And owsen frae the furrow'd field
Return sae dowf and weary O ;
Down by the burn, where birken buds
Wi' dew are hangin' clear, my jo,
I'll meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind Dearie O.

At midnight hour, in mirkest glen,
I'd rove, and ne'er be eerie O,
If thro' that glen I gaed to thee,
My ain kind Dearie O ;
Altho' the night were ne'er sae wild,
And I were ne'er sae weary O,
I'll meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind Dearie O.

The hunter lo'es the morning sun,
To rouse the mountain deer, my jo ;
At noon the fisher takes the glen
Adown the burn to steer, my jo :
Gie me the hour o' gloamin grey,
It maks my heart sae cheery O,
To meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind Dearie O.



Henry Graves & Co.

BU.

"For there I took the last Farewell
O' my sweet Highland Mary."

MY WIFE'S A WINSOME WEE THING.

Air—"My Wife's a Wanton Wee Thing."

Chorus.—She is a winsome wee thing,
 She is a handsome wee thing,
 She is a lo'esome wee thing,
 'This dear wee wife o' mine.

I NEVER saw a fairer,
 I never lo'ed a dearer,
 And neist my heart I'll wear her,
 For fear my jewel tine.
 She is a winsome, etc.

The world's wrack we share o't;
 The warstle and the care o't;
 Wi' her I'll blythely bear it,
 And think my lot divine.
 She is a winsome, etc.

HIGHLAND MARY.²²⁰*Tune*—"Katherine Ogie."

YE banks and braes and streams around
 The castle o' Montgomery!
 Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
 Your waters never drumlie:
 There Simmer first unfald her robes,
 And there the langest tarry;
 For there I took the last Farewell
 O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay, green birk,
 How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
 As underneath their fragrant shade,
 I clasp'd her to my bosom!

The golden Hours on angel wings,
 Flew o'er me and my Dearie ;
 For dear to me, as light and life,
 Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' mony a vow, and lock'd embrace,
 Our parting was fu' tender ;
 And, pledging aft to meet again,
 We tore oursels asunder ;
 But oh ! fell Death's untimely frost,
 That nipt my Flower sae early !
 Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay
 That wraps my Highland Mary !

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
 I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly !
 And clos'd for ay, the sparkling glance
 That dwalt on me sae kindly !
 And mouldering now in silent dust,
 That heart that lo'ed me dearly !
 But still within my bosom's core
 Shall live my Highland Mary.

THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN.

AN OCCASIONAL ADDRESS

SPOKEN BY MISS FONTENELLE ON HER BENEFIT NIGHT,
 NOVEMBER 26, 1792.

WHILE Europe's eye is fix'd on mighty things,
 The fate of empires and the fall of kings ;
 While quacks of State must each produce his plan,
 And even children lisp the Rights of Man ;
 Amid this mighty fuss just let me mention,
 The Rights of Woman merit some attention.

First, in the sexes' intermix'd connection,
 One sacred Right of Woman is *protection*.—
 The tender flower that lifts its head, elate,
 Helpless, must fall before the blasts of fate,

Sunk on the earth, defac'd its lovely form,
Unless your shelter ward th' impending storm.

Our second Right-—but needless here is caution,
To keep that right inviolate's the fashion ;
Each man of sense has it so full before him,
He'd die before he'd wrong it 'tis *decorum*.—
There was, indeed, in far less polish'd days,
A time, when rough rude man had naughty ways ;
Would swagger, swear, get drunk, kick up a riot,
Nay even thus invade a lady's quiet.
Now, thank our stars! these Gothic times are fled ;
Now, well-bred men and you are all well-bred—
Most justly think (and we are much the gainers)
Such conduct neither spirit, wit, nor manners.
For Right the third, our last, our best, our dearest,
That right to fluttering female hearts the nearest ;
Which even the Rights of Kings, in low prostration,
Most humbly own—'tis dear, dear *admiration* !
In that blest sphere alone we live and move ;
There taste that life of life—immortal love.
Smiles, glances, sighs, tears, fits, flirtations, airs ;
'Gainst such an host what flinty savage dares,
When awful Beauty joins with all her charms—
Who is so rash as rise in rebel arms ?
But truce with kings, and truce with constitutions,
With bloody armaments and revolutions ;
Let Majesty your first attention summon,
Ah ! ca ! ira ! THE MAJESTY OF WOMAN !

ON SEEING MISS FONTENELLE IN A FAVOURITE
CHARACTER.

SWEET naiveté of feature,
Simple, wild, enchanting elf,
Not to thee, but thanks to Nature,
Thou art acting but thyself.

Wert thou awkward, stiff, affected,
 Spurning Nature, torturing art ;
 Loves and Graces all rejected,
 Then indeed thou'd'st act a part.

EXTEMPORE ON SOME COMMEMORATIONS OF THOMSON.

DOST thou not rise, indignant shade,
 And smile wi' spurning scorn,
 When they wha wad hae starved thy life,
 Thy senseless turf adorn ?

Helpless, alane, thou clamb the brae,
 Wi' meikle honest toil,
 And claught th' unfading garland there—
 Thy sair-won, rightful spoil.

And wear it there ! and call aloud
 This axiom undoubted—
 Would thou hae Nobles' patronage ?
 First learn to live without it !

To whom hae much, more shall be given,
 Is every Great man's faith ;
 But he, the helpless, needful wretch,
 Shall lose the mite he hath.

AULD ROB MORRIS.

THERE'S Auld Rob Morris that wons in yon glen,
 He's the King o' gude fellows, and wale o' auld men ;
 He has gowd in his coffers, he has owsen and kine,
 And ae bonie lass, his dautie and mine.

She's fresh as the morning, the fairest in May ;
 She's sweet as the ev'ning amang the new hay ;
 As blythe and as artless as the lambs on the lea,
 And dear to my heart as the light to my e'e.

But oh ! she's an Heiress, auld Robin's a laird,
 And my daddie has nought but a cot house and yard ;
 A wooer like me maunna hope to come speed,
 The wounds I must hude that will soon be my dead.

The day comes to me, but delight brings me nane ;
 The night comes to me, but my rest it is gane ;
 I wander my lane like a night-troubled ghaist,
 And I sigh as my heart it wad burst in my breast.

O had she but been of a lower degree,
 I then might hae hop'd she wad smil'd upon me !
 O how past descriving had then been my bliss,
 As now my distraction nae words can express.

WEARY FA' YOU, DUNCAN GRAY.²³⁰

Tune—"Duncan Gray."

WEARY fa' you, Duncan Gray !
 Ha, ha, the girdin o't !
 Wae gae by you, Duncan Gray !
 Ha, ha, the girdin o't !
 When a' the lave gae to their play,
 Then I maun sit the lee-lang day,
 And jeeg the cradle wi' my tae,
 And a' for the girdin o't.

Bonie was the Lammas moon,
 Ha, ha, the girdin o't !
 Glow'rin a' the hills aboon,
 Ha, ha, the girdin o't !

The girdin brak, the beast cam doun,
 I tint my curch and baith my shoon,
 And, Duncan, ye're an unco loun—
 Wae on the girdin o't!

But, Duncan, gin ye'll keep your aith,
 Ha, ha, the girdin o't!
 I'se bless you wi' my hindmost breath,
 Ha, ha, the girdin o't!
 Duncan, gin ye'll keep your aith,
 The beast again can bear us baith,
 And Auld Mess John will mend the skaith,
 And clout the bad girdin o't.

DUNCAN GRAY.²³¹

DUNCAN GRAY cam' here to woo,
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
 On blythe Yule-night when we were fou,
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
 Maggie coost her head fu' high,
 Look'd asklent and unco skeigh,
 Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh;
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Duncan fleech'd and Duncan pray'd;
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
 Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig,
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't:
 Duncan sigh'd baith out and in,
 Grat his e'en baith blear't an' blin',
 Spak o' lowpin o'er a linn;
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Time and Chance are but a tide,
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
 Slighted love is sair to bide,
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't:



BU.

"Maggie coost her head fu' high,
Look'd asklent and unco skeigh."

Shall I like a fool, quoth he,
 For a haughty hizzie die '
 She may gae to—France for me!
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

How it comes let doctors tell,
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't :
 Meg grew sick, as he grew hale,
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
 Something in her bosom wrings,
 For relief a sigh she brings :
 And oh! her een they spak sic things!
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Duncan was a lad o' grace,
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't :
 Maggie's was a piteous case,
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't ;
 Duncan could na be her death,
 Swelling Pity smoor'd his wrath ;
 Now they're crouse and canty bath,
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

HERE'S A HEALTH TO THEM THAT'S AWA'.²³²

HERE'S a health to them that's awa',
 Here's a health to them that's awa' ;
 And wha winna wish gude luck to our cause,
 May never gude luck be their fa'!
 It's gude to be merry and wise,
 It's gude to be honest and true ;
 It's gude to support Caledonia's cause,
 And bide by the buff and the blue.

Here's a health to them that's awa',
 Here's a health to them that's awa',
 Here's a health to Charlie the chief o' the clan,
 Altho' that his band be but sma'!

May Liberty meet wi' success!
 May Prudence protect her frae evil!
 May tyrants and tyranny tine i' the mist,
 And wander their way to the devil!

Here's a health to them that's awa',
 Here's a health to them that's awa';
 Here's a health to Tammie, the Norlan' laddie,
 That lives at the lug o' the law!
 Here's freedom to them that wad read,
 Here's freedom to them that would write,
 There's nane ever fear'd that the truth should be heard,
 But they whom the truth would indite.

Here's a health to them that's awa',
 An' here's to them that's awa'!
 Here's to Maitland and Wycombe, let wha does na like 'em
 Be built in a hole in the wa',
 Here's timmer that's red at the heart,
 Here's fruit that is sound at the core;
 And may he that wad turn the buff and blue coat
 Be turn'd to the back o' the door.

Here's a health to them that's awa',
 Here's a health to them that's awa';
 Here's chieftain M'Leod, a chieftain worth gowd,
 Tho' bred amang mountains o' snaw,
 Here's friends on baith sides o' the firth,
 And friends on baith sides o' the Tweed;
 And wha wad betray old Albion's right,
 May they never eat of her bread!

A TIPPLING BALLAD.²³³

ON THE DUKE OF BRUNSWICK'S BREAKING UP HIS CAMP, AND
 THE DEFEAT OF THE AUSTRIANS, BY DUMOURIER, NOV. 1792.

WHEN Princes and Prelates,
 And hot-headed zealots,
 A' Europe had set in a low, a low,

The poor man lies down,
 Nor envies a crown,
 And comforts himself as he dows, as he dows,
 And comforts himself as he dows.

The black-headed eagle,
 As keen as a beagle,
 He hunted o'er height and o'er howe, o'er howe,
 In the braes o' Genappe,
 He fell in a trap,
 E'en let him come out as he dows, dows, dows,
 E'en let him come out as he dows.

.

But truce with commotions,
 And new-fangled notions,
 A bumper, I trust you'll allow ;
 Here's George our good king,
 And Charlotte his queen,
 And lang may they ring as they dows, dows, dows,
 And lang may they ring as they dows.

WRITTEN ON A WINDOW-PANE,

A.D. 1793.

IN Politics if thou would'st mix,
 And mean thy fortunes be ;
 Bear this in mind, be deaf and blind,
 Let great folk hear and see.

POORTITH CAULD AND RESTLESS LOVE.²³⁴

Tune—"Cauld Kail in Aberdeen."

O POORTITH cauld, and restless love,
 Ye wrack my peace between ye ;
 Yet poortith a' I could forgive,
 An' 'twere na for my Jeanie.

Chorus.—O why should Fate sic pleasure have,
Life's dearest bands untwining ?
Or why sae sweet a flower as love
Depend on Fortune's shining ?

The world's wealth, when I think on,
Its pride and a' the lave o't ;
O fie on silly coward man,
That he should be the slave o't !
O why, etc.

Her e'en, sae bonie blue betray
How she repays my passion ;
But prudence is her o'erword ay,
She talks o' rank and fashion.
O why, etc.

O wha can prudence think upon,
And sic a lassie by him ?
O wha can prudence think upon,
And sae in love as I am ?
O why, etc.

How blest the simple cotter's fate !
He woo's his artless dearie ;
The silly bogles, wealth and state,
Can never make him eerie.
O why, etc.

BRAW LADS O' GALLA WATER.²³⁵

BRAW, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
They rove amang the blooming heather ;
But Yarrow braes, nor Ettrick shaws
Can match the lads o' Galla Water.

But there is ane, a secret ane,
Aboon them a' I loe him better;
And I'll be his, and he'll be mine,
The bonie lad o' Galla Water.

Altho' his daddie was nae laird,
And tho' I hae na meikle tocher,
Yet rich in kindest, truest love,
We'll tent our flocks by Galla Water.

It ne'er was wealth, it ne'er was wealth,
That coft contentment, peace, or pleasure:
The bands and bliss o' mutual love,
O that's the chiefest warld's treasure.

SONNET WRITTEN ON THE AUTHOR'S BIRTHDAY.

ON HEARING A THRUSH SING IN HIS MORNING WALK.

SING on, sweet thrush, upon the leafless bough,
Sing on, sweet bird, I listen to thy strain,
See agèd Winter, 'mid his surly reign,
At thy blythe carol, clears his furrowed brow.

So in lone Poverty's dominion drear,
Sits meek Content with light, unanxious heart;
Welcomes the rapid moments, bids them part,
Nor asks if they bring ought to hope or fear.

I thank thee, Author of this opening day!
Thou whose bright sun now gilds yon orient skies!
Riches denied, Thy boon was purer joys—
What wealth could never give nor take away!

Yet come, thou child of poverty and care,
The mite high Heav'n bestow'd, that mite with thee I'll
share.

LORD GREGORY.²³⁶

O MIRK, mirk is this midnight hour,
And loud the tempest's roar ;
A waefu' wanderer seeks thy tower,
Lord Gregory, ope thy door.
An exile frae her father's ha',
And a' for sake o' thee ;
At least some pity on me shaw,
If love it may na be.

Lord Gregory, mind'st thou not the grove
By bonie Irwine side,
Where first I own'd that virgin love
I lang, lang had denied.
How aften didst thou pledge and vow,
Thou wad for ay be mine!
And my fond heart, itsel' sae true,
It ne'er mistrusted thine.

Hard is thy heart, Lord Gregory,
And flinty is thy breast :
Thou bolt of Heaven that flashest by,
O, wilt thou bring me rest !
Ye mustering thunders from above,
Your willing victim see ;
But spare and pardon my fause Love,
His wrangs to Heaven and me.

WANDERING WILLIE.²³⁷

FIRST VERSION

HERE awa', there awa', wandering Willie,
Now tired with wandering, haud awa' hame ;
Come to my bosom, my ae only dearie,
And tell me thou bring'st me my Willie the same.

Loud blew the cauld winter winds at our parting ;
It was na the blast brought the tear in my e'e :
Now welcome the Simmer, and welcome my Willie,
The Simmer to Nature, my Willie to me.

Ye hurricanes rest in the cave o' your slumbers,
O how your wild horrors a lover alarms !
Awaken, ye breezes, row gently, ye billows,
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms.
But if he's forgotten his faithfulest Nannie,
O still flow between us, thou wide roaring main ;
May I never see it, may I never trow it,
But, dying, believe that my Willie's my ain !

WANDERING WILLIE.

REVISED VERSION

HERE awa', there awa', wandering Willie,
Here awa', there awa', haud awa' hame ;
Come to my bosom, my ain only dearie,
Tell me thou bring'st me my Willie the same.
Winter winds blew loud and cauld at our parting,
Fears for my Willie brought tears to my e'e,
Welcome now Simmer, and welcome my Willie,
The Simmer to Nature, my Willie to me.

Rest, ye wild storms, in the cave of your slumbers,
How your dread howling a lover alarms !
Wauken, ye breezes, row gently, ye billows,
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms.
But oh, if he's faithless, and minds na his Nannie,
Flow still between us, thou wide roaring main !
May I never see it, may I never trow it,
But, dying, believe that my Willie's my ain.

OPEN THE DOOR TO ME, OH.²³⁸

OH, open the door, some pity to show,
Oh, open the door to me, oh,
Tho' thou hast been false, I'll ever prove true,
Oh, open the door to me, oh.

Cauld is the blast upon my pale cheek,
But caulder thy love for me, oh :
The frost that freezes the life at my heart,
Is nought to my pains frae thee, oh.

The wan Moon is setting behind the white wave,
And Time is setting with me, oh :
False friends, false love, farewell! for mair
I'll ne'er trouble them, nor thee, oh.

She has open'd the door, she has open'd it wide,
She sees the pale corse on the plain, oh :
"My true love!" she cried, and sank down by his side,
Never to rise again, oh.

LOVELY YOUNG JESSIE.²³⁹

TRUE hearted was he, the sad swain o' the Yarrow,
And fair are the maids on the banks of the Ayr ;
But by the sweet side o' the Nith's winding river,
Are lovers as faithful, and maidens as fair :
To equal young JESSIE seek Scotland all over ;
To equal young JESSIE you seek it in vain,
Grace, beauty, and elegance fetter her lover,
And maidenly modesty fixes the chain.

Fresh is the rose in the gay, dewy morning,
And sweet is the lily at evening close ;
But in the fair presence o' lovely young JESSIE,
Unseen is the lily, unheeded the rose.

Love sits in her smile, a wizard ensnaring ;
Enthron'd in her een he delivers his law ;
And still to her charms SHE alone is a stranger ;
Her modest demeanor's the jewel of a'.

MEG O' THE MILL.²⁴⁰

O KEN ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten,
An ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten ?
She's gotten a coof wi' a claute o' siller,
And broken the heart o' the barley Miller.

The Miller was strappin, the Miller was ruddy ;
A heart like a lord, and a hue like a lady ,
The laird was a widdifu' bleert knurl ;
She's left the gude fellow, and taen the churl.

The Miller he hecht her a heart leal and loving,
The laird did address her wi' matter mair moving,
A fine pacing-horse wi' a clear chainèd bridle,
A whip by her side, and a bonie side-saddle.

O wae on the siller, it is sae prevailin',
And wae on the love that is fixed on a mailen !
A tocher's nae word in a true lover's parl,
But gie me my love, and a fig for the warl !

MEG O' THE MILL.

ANOTHER VERSION.

O KEN ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten,
An' ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten ?
A braw new naig wi' the tail o' a rottan,
And that's what Meg o' the Mill has gotten.

O ken ye what Meg o' the Mill loes dearly,
An' ken ye what Meg o' the Mill loes dearly?
A dram o' gude strunt in a morning early,
And that's what Meg o' the Mill loes dearly.

O ken ye how Meg o' the Mill was married,
An' ken ye how Meg o' the Mill was married?
The priest he was oxter'd, the clark he was carried,
And that's how Meg o' the Mill was married.

O ken ye how Meg o' the Mill was bedded,
An' ken ye how Meg o' the Mill was bedded?
The groom gat sae fu', he fell awald beside it,
And that's how Meg o' the Mill was bedded.

THE SOLDIER'S RETURN.

Air—"The Mill, mill, O."

WHEN wild war's deadly blast was blawn,
And gentle peace returning,
Wi' mony a sweet babe fatherless,
And mony a widow mourning;
I left the lines and tented field,
Where lang I'd been a lodger,
My humble knapsack a' my wealth,
A poor but honest sodger.

A leal, light heart was in my breast,
My hand unstain'd wi' plunder;
And for fair Scotia, hame again,
I cheery on did wander:
I thought upon the banks o' Coil,
I thought upon my Nancy,
I thought upon the witching smile
That caught my youthful fancy.

At length I reach'd the bonie glen,
Where early life I sported ;
I pass'd the mill and trysting thorn,
Where Nancy aft I courted :
Wha spied I but my ain dear maid,
Down by her mother's dwelling !
And turn'd me round to hide the flood
That in my e'en was swelling.

Wi' alter'd voice, quoth I, Sweet lass,
Sweet as yon hawthorn's blossom,
O! happy, happy may he be,
That's dearest to thy bosom :
My purse is light, I've far to gang,
And fain would be thy lodger ;
I've serv'd my king and country lang—
Take pity on a sodger.

Sae wistfully she gaz'd on me,
And lovelier was than ever ;
Quo' she, A sodger ance I lo'ed,
Forget him shall I never :
Our humble cot, and hamely fare,
Ye freely shall partake it ;
That gallant badge—the dear cockade,
Ye're welcome for the sake o't.

She gaz'd—she redden'd like a rose—
Syne pale like ony lily ;
She sank within my arms, and cried,
Art thou my ain dear Willie ?
By Him who made yon sun and sky !
By whom true love's regarded,
I am the man ; and thus may still
True lovers be rewarded !

The wars are o'er, and I'm come hame,
 And find thee still true-hearted ;
 Tho' poor in gear, we're rich in love,
 And mair we'se ne'er be parted.
 Quo' she, My grandsire left me gowd,
 A mailen plenish'd fairly ;
 And come, my faithfu' sodger lad,
 Thou'rt welcome to it dearly !

For gold the merchant ploughs the main,
 The farmer ploughs the manor ;
 But glory is the sodger's prize,
 The sodger's wealth is honor :
 The brave poor sodger ne'er despise,
 Nor count him as a stranger ;
 Remember he's his country's stay,
 In day and hour of danger.

ON COMMISSARY GOLDIE'S BRAINS.

LORD, to account who dares Thee call,
 Or e'er dispute Thy pleasure ?
 Else why, within so thick a wall,
 Enclose so poor a treasure ?

LINES INSCRIBED IN A LADY'S POCKET ALMANAC.

GRANT me, indulgent Heaven, that I may live,
 To see the miscreants feel the pains they give ;
 Deal Freedom's sacred treasures free as air,
 Till Slave and Despot be but things that were.

THANKSGIVING FOR A NATIONAL VICTORY.

YE hypocrites ! are these your pranks ?
 To murder men, and give God thanks !
 Desist, for shame !—proceed no further,
 God won't accept your thanks for MURDER !

LINES ON THE COMMEMORATION OF RODNEY'S VICTORY.

INSTEAD of a song, boys, I'll give you a toast ;
 Here's to the memory of those we have lost ! —
 That we *lost*, did I say :—nay, by Heav'n, that we *found* ,
 For their fame it will last while the world goes round.
 The next in succession I'll give you 's THE KING !
 Whoe'er would betray him, on high may he swing !
 And here's the grand fabric, the free CONSTITUTION,
 As built on the base of our great Revolution !
 And longer with Politics not to be cramm'd,
 Be ANARCHY curs'd, and be TYRANNY damn'd !
 And who would to LIBERTY e'er prove disloyal,
 May his son be a hangman—and himself his first trial !

KIRK AND STATE EXCISEMEN.

YE men of wit and wealth, why all this sneering
 'Gainst poor Excisemen ? Give the cause a hearing :
 What are your Landlord's rent-rolls ? taxing ledgers !
 What Premiers ?—what ev'n Monarchs ?—mighty Gaugers !
 Nay, what are Priests ? (those seeming godly wise-men),
 What are they, pray, but Spiritual Excisemen !

THE RAPTURES OF FOLLY.

THOU greybeard, old Wisdom ! may boast of thy treasures ,
 Give me with old Folly to live ;
 I grant thee thy calm-blooded, time-settled pleasures,
 But Folly has raptures to give.

YE TRUE LOYAL NATIVES.²⁴¹

YE true "Loyal Natives" attend to my song ;
 In uproar and riot rejoice the night long !
 From Envy and Hatred your core is exempt,
 But where is your shield from the darts of Contempt ?

EXTEMPORE REPLY TO AN INVITATION.

THE King's most humble servant, I
Can scarcely spare a minute ;
But I'll be wi' you by an' by ;
Or else the Deil's be in it.

GRACE AFTER MEAT.

L—D, we thank, and Thee adore,
For temporal gifts we little merit ;
At present we will ask no more—
Let *William Hislop* give the spirit.

GRACE BEFORE AND AFTER MEAT.

O LORD, when hunger pinches sore,
Do Thou stand us in stead,
And send us, from Thy bounteous store,
A tup or wether head! Amen.

O Lord, since we have feasted thus,
Which we so little merit,
Let Meg now take away the flesh,
And Jock bring in the spirit! Amen.

IMPROMPTU ON GENERAL DUMOURIER'S DESERTION FROM THE FRENCH REPUBLICAN ARMY.

YOU'RE welcome to Despots, Dumourier ;
You're welcome to Despots, Dumourier :
How does Dampiere do ?
Aye, and Bournonville too ?
Why did they not come along with you, Dumourier ?

I will fight France with you, Dumourier ;
I will fight France with you, Dumourier ,
 I will fight France with you,
 I will take my chance with you,
By my soul, I'll dance with you, Dumourier.

Then let us fight about, Dumourier ;
Then let us fight about, Dumourier ;
 Then let us fight about,
 Till Freedom's spark be out,
Then we'll be d—d, no doubt, Dumourier.

THE LAST TIME I CAME O'ER THE MOOR.²⁴²

THE last time I came o'er the moor,
 And left Maria's dwelling,
What throes, what tortures passing cure,
 Were in my bosom swelling :
Condemn'd to drag a hopeless chain,
 And yet in secret languish ;
To feel a fire in every vein,
 Yet dare not speak my anguish.

The wretch of love unseen, unknown,
 I fain my crime would cover :
The bursting sigh, th' unweeting groan,
 Betray the guilty lover.
I know my doom must be despair,
 Thou wilt nor canst relieve me ;
But oh, Maria, hear my prayer,
 For Pity's sake, forgive me !

The music of thy tongue I heard,
 Nor wist while it enslav'd me ;
I saw thine eyes, yet nothing fear'd,
 Till fear no more had sav'd me :

The unwary sailor thus, aghast,
 The wheeling torrent viewing,
 'Mid circling horrors yields at last
 To overwhelming ruin.

BLYTHE HAE I BEEN ON YON HILL.²⁴³

BLYTHE hae I been on yon hill,
 As the lambs before me ;
 Careless ilka thought and free,
 As the breeze flew o'er me ;
 Now nae langer sport and play,
 Mirth or sang can please me ;
 LESLEY is sae fair and coy,
 Care and anguish seize me.

Heavy, heavy is the task,
 Hopeless love declaring ;
 Trembling, I dow nocht but glow'r,
 Sighing, dumb despairing !
 If she winna ease the thraws
 In my bosom swelling,
 Underneath the grass-green sod,
 Soon maun be my dwelling.

LOGAN BRAES.²⁴⁴

O LOGAN, sweetly didst thou glide,
 That day I was my Willie's bride,
 And years sin syne hae o'er us run,
 Like Logan to the simmer sun :
 But now thy flowery banks appear
 Like drumlie Winter, dark and drear,
 While my dear lad maun face his faes,
 Far, far frae me and Logan braes.

Again the merry month of May
Has made our hills and valleys gay ;
The birds rejoice in leafy bowers,
The bees hum round the breathing flowers ;
Blythe Morning lifts his rosy eye,
And Evening's tears are tears o' joy :
My soul, delightless' a' surveys,
While Willie's far frae Logan braes.

Within yon milk-white hawthorn bush,
Amang her nestlings sits the thrush ;
Her faithfu' mate will share her toil,
Or wi' his song her cares beguile ;
But I wi' my sweet nursling here,
Nae mate to help, nae mate to cheer,
Pass widow'd nights and joyless days,
While Willie's far frae Logan braes.

O wae be to you, Men o' State,
That brethren rouse in deadly hate !
As ye make mony a fond heart mourn,
Sae may it on your heads return !
How can your flinty hearts enjoy
The widow's tear, the orphan's cry ?
But soon may peace bring happy days,
And Willie hame to Logan braes !

O WERE MY LOVE YON LILAC FAIR.

Air—"Hughie Graham."

O WERE my love yon Lilac fair,
Wi' purple blossoms to the Spring,
And I, a bird to shelter there,
When wearied on my little wing !
How I wad mourn when it was torn
By Autumn wild, and Winter rude !
But I wad sing on wanton wing,
When youthfu' May its bloom renew'd.

O gin my love were yon red rose,
That grows upon the castle wa';
And I mysel a drap o' dew,
Into her bonie breast to fa'!
O there, beyond expression blest,
I'd feast on beauty a' the night;
Seal'd on her silk-saft faulds to rest,
Till fley'd awa' by Phoebus' light!

BONIE JEAN.²⁴⁵

THERE was a lass, and she was fair,
At kirk and market to be seen;
When a' our fairest maids were met,
The fairest maid was bonie Jean.

And ay she wrought her mammie's wark,
And ay she sang sae merrilie;
The blythest bird upon the bush
Had ne'er a lighter heart than she.

But hawks will rob the tender joys
That bless the little lintwhite's nest;
And frost will blight the fairest flowers,
And love will break the soundest rest.

Young Robie was the bravest lad,
The flower and pride of a' the glen;
And he had owsen, sheep, and kye,
And wanton naigies nine or ten.

He gaed wi' Jeanie to the tryste,
He danc'd wi' Jeanie on the down;
And, lang ere witless Jeanie wist,
Her heart was tint, her peace was stown!

As in the bosom of the stream,
The moonbeam dwells at dewy e'en ;
So trembling, pure, was tender love
Within the breast of bome Jean.

And now she works her mammie's wark,
And ay she sighs wi' care and pain ;
Ye wist na what her ail might be,
Or what wad make her weel again.

But did na Jeanie's heart loup light,
And did na joy blink in her e'e ;
As Robie tauld a tale of love :
Ae e'enin on the lily lea ?

The sun was sinking in the west,
The birds sang sweet in ilka grove ;
His cheek to hers he fondly laid,
And whisper'd thus his tale o' love :

" O Jeanie fair, I lo'e thee dear ;
O canst thou think to fancy me,
Or wilt thou leave thy mammie's cot,
And learn to tent the farms wi' me ?

" At barn or byre thou shalt na drudge,
Or naething else to trouble thee ;
But stray amang the heather-bells,
And tent the waving corn wi' me."

Now what could artless Jeanie do ?
She had nae will to say him na :
At length she blush'd a sweet consent,
And love was ay between them twa.

LINES ON JOHN M'MURDO, ESQ.

BLEST be M'Murdo to his latest day!
No envious cloud o'ercast his evening ray;
No wrinkle, furrow'd by the hand of care,
Nor ever sorrow add one silver hair!
O may no son the father's honor stain,
Nor ever daughter give the mother pain!

EPITAPH ON A LAPDOG.

IN wood and wild, ye warbling throng,
Your heavy loss deplore;
Now, half extinct your powers of song,
Sweet "Echo" is no more.

Ye jarring, screeching things around,
Scream your discordant joys;
Now, half your din of tuneless sound
With "Echo" silent lies.

EPIGRAMS AGAINST THE EARL OF GALLOWAY.²⁴⁶

WHAT dost thou in that mansion fair?
Flit, Galloway, and find
Some narrow, dirty, dungeon cave,
The picture of thy mind.

No Stewart art thou, Galloway,
The Stewarts all were brave;
Besides, the Stewarts were but fools,
Not one of them a knave.

Bright ran thy line, O Galloway,
Thro' many a far-famed sire!
So ran the far-famed Roman way,
And ended in a mire.

Spare me thy vengeance, Galloway!
In quiet let me live :
I ask no kindness at thy hand,
For thou hast none to give.

EPIGRAM ON THE LAIRD OF LAGGAN.

WHEN Morine, deceas'd, to the Devil went down,
'Twas nothing would serve him but Satan's own crown ;
" Thy fool's head," quoth Satan, " that crown shall wear never,
I grant thou'rt as wicked, but not quite so clever."

PHILLIS THE FAIR.²⁴⁷

WHILE larks, with little wing, fann'd the pure air,
Tasting the breathing Spring, forth I did fare :
Gay the sun's golden eye
Peep'd o'er the mountains high ;
Such thy morn! did I cry, Phillis the fair,

In each bird's careless song, glad I did share ;
While yon wild-flow'rs among, chance led me there !
Sweet to the op'ning day,
Rosebuds bent the dewy spray ;
Such thy bloom! did I say, Phillis the fair.

Down in the shady walk, doves cooing were ;
Mark'd I the cruel hawk caught in a snare :
So kind may fortune be,
Such make his destiny,
He who would injure thee, Phillis the fair

HAD I A CAVE.²⁴⁸*Tune*—"Robin Adair."

HAD I a cave on some wild distant shore,
 Where the winds howl to the wave's dashing roar :
 There would I weep my woes,
 There seek my lost repose,
 Till grief my eyes should close.
 Ne'er to wake more !

Falsest of womankind, can'st thou declare
 All thy fond, plighted vows fleeting as air !
 To thy new lover hie,
 Laugh o'er thy perjury ;
 Then in thy bosom try
 What peace is there !

BY ALLAN STREAM.

BY Allan stream I chanc'd to rove,
 While Phœbus sank beyond Benledi ;
 The winds were whispering thro' the grove,
 The yellow corn was waving ready :
 I listen'd to a lover's sang,
 An' thought on youthfu' pleasures mony ;
 And ay the wild-wood echoes rang—
 " O, dearly do I lo'e thee, Annie !

" O happy be the woodbine bower,
 Nae nightly bogle make it eerie ;
 Nor ever sorrow stain the hour,
 The place and time I met my dearie !
 Her head upon my throbbing breast,
 She, sinking, said, ' I'm thine for ever !'
 While mony a kiss the seal imprest—
 The sacred vow we ne'er should sever."

The haunt o' Spring's the primrose-brae,
 The Summer joys the flocks to follow ;
 How cheery thro' her short'ning day,
 Is Autumn in her weeds o' yellow ;
 But can they melt the glowing heart,
 Or chain the soul in speechless pleasure ?
 Or thro' each nerve the rapture dart,
 Like meeting her, our bosom's treasure ?

WHISTLE AND I'LL COME TO YOU, MY LAD.²¹¹

Chorus.—O whistle an' I'll come to ye, my lad,
 O whistle an' I'll come to ye, my lad,
 Tho' father an' mother an' a' should gae mad,
 O whistle an' I'll come to ye, my lad.

BUT warily tent when ye come to court me,
 And come nae unless the back-yett be a-jee ;
 Syne up the back-style, and let naebody see,
 And come as ye were na comin to me,
 And come as ye were na comin to me.
 O whistle an' I'll come, etc.

At kirk, or at market, whene'er ye meet me,
 Gang by me as tho' that ye car'd na a flie ;
 But steal me a blink o' your bonie black e'e,
 Yet look as ye were na lookin to me,
 Yet look as ye were na lookin to me.
 O whistle an' I'll come, etc.

Ay vow and protest that ye care na for me,
 And whyles ye may lightly my beauty a-wee ;
 But court na anither tho' jokin ye be,
 For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me,
 For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me.
 O whistle an' I'll come, etc.

PHILLIS THE QUEEN O' THE FAIR.

ADOWN winding Nith I did wander,
To mark the sweet flowers as they spring ;
Adown winding Nith I did wander,
Of Phillis to muse and to sing.

Chorus.—Awa' wi' your Belles and your Beauties,
They never wi' her can compare,
Whaever has met wi' my Phillis,
Has met wi' the queen o' the Fair.

The Daisy amus'd my fond fancy,
So artless, so simple, so wild ;
Thou emblem, said I, o' my Phillis—
For she is Simplicity's child,
Awa' wi' your Belles, etc.

The Rosebud's the blush o' my charmer,
Her sweet balmy lip when 'tis prest :
How fair and how pure is the Lily !
But fairer and purer her breast.
Awa' wi' your Belles, etc.

Yon knot of gay flowers in the arbour,
They ne'er wi' my Phillis can vie :
Her breath is the breath of the woodbine,
Its dew-drop o' diamond her eye.
Awa' wi' your Belles, etc.

Her voice is the song o' the morning,
That wakes thro' the green-spreading grove
When Phœbus peeps over the mountains,
On music, and pleasure, and love.
Awa' wi' your Belles, etc.

But, Beauty, how frail and how fleeting!
The bloom of a fine summer's day;
While Worth in the mind o' my Phillis,
Will flourish without a decay.
Awa' wi' your Belles, etc.

COME, LET ME TAKE THEE TO MY BREAST.

COME, let me take thee to my breast,
And pledge we ne'er shall sunder;
And I shall spurn, as vilest dust,
The world's wealth and grandeur:
And do I hear my Jeanie own
That equal transports move her?
I ask for dearest life alone,
That I may live to love her.

Thus, in my arms, wi' a' her charms,
I clasp my countless treasure;
I'll seek nae mair o' Heav'n to share,
Than sic a moment's pleasure:
And by thy e'en sae bonie blue,
I swear I'm thine for ever!
And on thy lips I seal my vow,
And break it shall I never.

DAINTY DAVIE.²⁵⁰

NOW rosy May comes in wi' flowers,
To deck her gay, green-spreading bowers;
And now comes in the happy hours,
To wander wi' my Davie.

Chorus.—Meet me on the warlock knowe,
Dainty Davie, dainty Davie;
There I'll spend the day wi' you,
My ain dear, dainty Davie.

POEMS AND SONGS.

The crystal waters round us fa',
 The merry birds are lovers a',
 The scented breezes round us blaw,
 A-wandering wi' my Davie.
 Meet me on, etc.

As purple morning starts the hare,
 To steal upon her carly fare,
 Then thro' the dews I will repair,
 To meet my faithfu' Davie.
 Meet me on, etc.

When day, expiring in the west,
 The curtain draws o' Nature's rest,
 I flee to his arms I loe the best,
 And that's my ain dear Davie.
 Meet me on, etc.

 ROBERT BRUCE'S MARCH TO BANNOCKBURN.²⁵¹

SCOTS, wha hae wi' WALLACE bled,
 Scots, wham BRUCE has aften led,
 Welcome to your gory bed,
 Or to Victorie!
 Now's the day, and now's the hour;
 See the front o' battle lour;
 See approach proud EDWARD'S power—
 Chains and Slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
 Wha can fill a coward's grave?
 Wha sae base as be a slave?
 Let him turn and flee!



BU

"Tyrants fall in every foe!
LIBERTY'S in every blow! -
Let us Do - or Die!"

Wha for Scotland's King and Law,
 Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
 FREE-MAN stand, or FREE-MAN fa',
 Let him follow me!

By Oppression's woes and pains!
 By your Sons in servile chains!
 We will drain our dearest veins,
 But they *shall* be free!
 Lay the proud Usurpers low!
 Tyrants fall in every foe!
 LIBERTY'S in every blow!—
 Let us Do—or Die!!!

BEHOLD THE HOUR, THE BOAT ARRIVE.²⁵²

VERSION SECOND.

BEHOLD the hour, the boat arrive ;
 Thou goest, the darling of my heart ;
 Sever'd from thee, can I survive,
 But Fate has will'd and we must part.
 I'll often greet the surging swell,
 Yon distant Isle will often hail :
 " E'en here I took the last farewell ;
 There, latest mark'd her vanish'd sail "

Along the solitary shore,
 While flitting sea-fowl round me cry
 Across the rolling, dashing roar,
 I'll westward turn my wistful eye :
 " Happy, thou Indian grove," I'll say,
 " Where now my Nancy's path may be!
 While thro' thy sweets she loves to stray,
 O tell me, does she muse on me ! "

THOU HAST LEFT ME EVER, JAMIE.

Tune—"Fee him, father, fee him."

THOU hast left me ever, Jamie,
Thou hast left me ever ;
Thou hast left me ever, Jamie,
Thou hast left me ever :
Aften hast thou vow'd that Death
Only should us sever ;
Now thou'st left thy lass for ay—
I maun see thee never, Jamie,
I'll see thee never.

Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie,
Thou hast me forsaken ;
Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie,
Thou hast me forsaken ;
Thou canst love another jo,
While my heart is breaking ;
Soon my weary een I'll close,
Never mair to waken, Jamie,
Never mair to waken !

WHERE ARE THE JOYS I HAE MET ?

Tune—"Saw ye my father."

WHERE are the joys I hae met in the morning,
That danc'd to the lark's early sang ?
Where is the peace that awaited my wand'ring,
At e'ening the wild-woods amang ?

Nae mair a winding the course o' yon river,
And marking sweet flowerets sae fair,
Nae mair I trace the light footsteps o' Pleasure,
But Sorrow and sad-sighing Care.

Is it that Summer's forsaken our valleys,
And grim, surly Winter is near?
No, no, the bees humming round the gay roses
Proclaim it the pride o' the year.

Fain wad I hide what I fear to discover,
Yet lang, lang, too well hae I known;
A' that has caused the wreck in my bosom,
Is Jenny, fair Jenny alone.

Time cannot aid me, my griefs are immortal,
Not Hope dare a comfort bestow:
Come then, enamor'd and fond of my anguish,
Enjoyment I'll seek in my woe.

DELUDED SWAIN, THE PLEASURE.

Tune—"The Collier's Dochter."

DELUDED swain, the pleasure
The fickle Fair can give thee,
Is but a fairy treasure,
Thy hopes will soon deceive thee:
The billows on the ocean,
The breezes idly roaming,
The cloud's uncertain motion,
They are but types of Woman.

O art thou not asham'd
To doat upon a feature?
If Man thou wouldst be nam'd
Despise the silly creature.
Go, find an honest fellow,
Good claret set before thee,
Hold on till thou art mellow,
And then to bed in glory!

THINE AM I, MY FAITHFUL FAIR.

Tune—"The Quaker's Wife."

THINE am I, my faithful Fair,
Thine, my lovely Nancy ;
Ev'ry pulse along my veins,
Ev'ry roving fancy.
To thy bosom lay my heart,
There to throb and languish ;
Tho' despair had wrung its core,
That would heal its anguish.

Take away those rosy lips,
Rich with balmy treasure ;
Turn away thine eyes of love,
Lest I die with pleasure !
What is life when wanting Love ?
Night without a morning :
Love's the cloudless summer sun,
Nature gay adorning.

ON MRS. RIDDELL'S BIRTHDAY,

NOVEMBER 4, 1793.

OLD WINTER, with his frosty beard,
Thus once to Jove his prayer preferred :
"What have I done of all the year,
To bear this hated doom severe ?
My cheerless suns no pleasure know ;
Night's horrid car drags dreary slow ;
My dismal months no joys are crowning,
But spleeny English hanging, drowning.

"Now Jove, for once be mighty civil,
To counterbalance all this evil ;
Give me, and I've no more to say,
Give me Maria's natal day !

That brilliant gift shall so enrich me,
Spring, Summer, Autumn, cannot match me."
" 'Tis done!" says Jove ; so ends my story,
And winter once rejoiced in glory.

MY SPOUSE NANCY.²⁵³

Tune—" My Jo Janet."

" HUSBAND, husband, cease your strife,
Nor longer idly rave, Sir ,
Tho' I am your wedded wife
Yet I am not your slave, Sir."
" One of two must still obey,
Nancy, Nancy ;
Is it Man or Woman, say,
My spouse Nancy ? "

" If 'tis still the lordly word,
Service and obedience ;
I'll desert my sov'reign lord,
And so, good-bye, allegiance!"
" Sad will I be, so bereft,
Nancy, Nancy ;
Yet I'll try to make a shift,
My spouse Nancy."

" My poor heart, then break it must,
My last hour I'm near it :
When you lay me in the dust,
Think how you will bear it."
" I will hope and trust in Heaven,
Nancy, Nancy ;
Strength to bear it will be given,
My spouse Nancy."

" Well, Sir, from the silent dead,
 Still I'll try to daunt you ;
 Ever round your midnight bed
 Horrid sprites shall haunt you !"
 " I'll wed another like my dear
 Nancy, Nancy ;
 Then all hell will fly for fear,
 My spouse Nancy."

ADDRESS

SPOKEN BY MISS FONTENELLE ON HER BENEFIT NIGHT,
 DECEMBER 4, 1793, AT THE THEATRE, DUMFRIES.

STILL anxious to secure your partial favor,
 And not less anxious, sure, this night than ever,
 A Prologue, Epilogue, or some such matter,
 'Twould vamp my bill, said I, if nothing better ;
 So sought a poet, roosted near the skies,
 Told him, I came to feast my curious eyes ;
 Said, nothing like his works was ever printed ;
 And last, my prologue-business slyly hinted.
 " Ma'am, let me tell you," quoth my man of rhymes,
 " I know your bent—these are no laughing times :
 Can you—but, Miss, I own I have my fears—
 Dissolve in pause, and sentimental tears ;
 With laden sighs, and solemn-rounded sentence,
 Rouse from his sluggish slumbers, fell Repentance ;
 Paint Vengeance as he takes his horrid stand,
 Waving on high the desolating brand,
 Calling the storms to bear him o'er a guilty land ? "

I could no more—askance the creature eyeing,
 D'ye think, said I, this face was made for crying ?
 I'll laugh, that's poz—nay more, the world shall know it ;
 And so, your servant ! gloomy Master Poet !

Firm as my creed, Sirs, 'tis my fix'd belief,
 That Misery's another word for Grief :
 I also thunk—so may I be a bride !
 That so much laughter, so much life enjoy'd.

Thou man of crazy care and ceaseless sigh,
 Still under bleak Misfortune's blasting eye ;
 Doom'd to that sorest task of man alive—
 To make three guineas do the work of five :
 Laugh in Misfortune's face—the beldam witch !
 Say, you'll be merry, tho' you can't be rich.

Thou other man of care, the wretch in love,
 Who long with jiltish arts and airs hast strove ;
 Who, as the boughs all temptingly project,
 Measur'st in desperate thought—a rope—thy neck—
 Or, where the beetling cliff o'erhangs the deep,
 Peerest to meditate the healing leap :
 Would'st thou be cur'd, thou silly, moping elf ·
 Laugh at her follies—laugh e'en at thyself :
 Learn to despise those frowns now so terrific,
 And love a kinder—that's your grand specific.

To sum up all, be merry, I advise ;
 And as we're merry, may we still be wise.

COMPLIMENTARY EPIGRAM ON MARIA RIDDELL

“ PRAISE Woman still,” his lordship roars,
 “ Deserv'd or not, no matter !”
 But thee, whom all my soul adores,
 Ev'n Flattery cannot flatter :
 MARIA, all my thought and dream,
 Inspires my vocal shell ;
 The more I praise my lovely theme,
 The more the truth I tell.

REMORSEFUL APOLOGY.²⁵⁴

THE friend whom, wiled from Wisdom's way,
 The fumes of wine infuriate send,
 (Not moony madness more astray)
 Who but deplores that hapless friend?

Mine was th' insensate frenzied part,
 Ah! why should I such scenes outlive?
 Scenes so abhorrent to my heart!—
 'Tis thine to pity and forgive.

WILT THOU BE MY DEARIE?

Tune—"The Sutor's Dochter."

WILT thou be my Dearie?
 When Sorrow wrings thy gentle heart,
 O wilt thou let me cheer thee!
 By the treasure of my soul,
 That's the love I bear thee:
 I swear and vow that only thou
 Shall ever be my Dearie!
 Only thou, I swear and vow,
 Shall ever be my Dearie!

Lassie, say thou lo'es me;
 Or, if thou wilt na be my ain,
 O say na thou'lt refuse me!
 If it winna, canna be,
 Thou for thine may choose me,
 Let me, lassie, quickly die,
 Still trusting that thou lo'es me!
 Lassie, let me quickly die,
 Still trusting that thou lo'es me!

A FIDDLER IN THE NORTH.²⁵⁵

Tune—"The King o' France he rade a race."

AMANG the trees, where humming bees,
 At buds and flowers were hinging, O,
 Auld Caledon drew out her drone,
 And to her pipe was singing, O :
 'Twas Pibroch, Sang, Strathspeys and Reels,
 She dirl'd them aff fu' clearly, O ;
 When there cam' a yell o' foreign squeels,
 That dang her tapsalteerie, O.

Their capon craws an' queer "ha, ha's,"
 They made our lugs grow eerie, O ;
 The hungry bike did scrape and fyke,
 Till we were wae and weary, O :
 But a royal ghaist, wha ance was cas'd,
 A prisoner, aughteen year awa',
 He fir'd a Fiddler in the North,
 That dang them tapsalteerie, O.

AS I STOOD BY YON ROOFLESS TOWER.²⁵⁶

AS I stood by yon roofless tower,
 Where the wa'flow'r scents the dewy air,
 Where the houlet mourns in her ivy bower,
 And tells the midnight moon her care.

Chorus.—A lassie all alone, was making her moan,
 Lamenting our lads beyond the sea,
 In the bluidy wars they fa', and our honor's
 gane an' a',
 And broken-hearted we maun die.

The winds were laid, the air was still,
The stars they shot along the sky ;
The tod was howling on the hull,
And the distant-ec'ioing glens reply.
A lassie all alone, etc.

The burn, adown its hazelly path,
Was rushing by the ruin'd wa',
Hasting to join the sweeping Nith,
Whase roarings seemed to rise and fa'.
A lassie all alone, etc.

The cauld blae North was streaming forth
Her lights, wi' hissing, eerie din,
Athort the lift they start and shift,
Like Fortune's favors, tint as win'.
A lassie all alone, etc.

Now, looking over frith and fauld,
Her horn the pale-faced Cynthia rear'd,
When lo! in form of Minstrel auld,
A stern and stalwart ghaist appear'd.
A lassie all alone, etc.

And frae his harp sic strains did flow,
Might rous'd the slumbering Dead to hear ;
But oh, it was a tale of woe,
As ever met a Briton's ear!
A lassie all alone, etc.

He sang wi' joy his former day,
He, weeping, wail'd his latter times ;
But what he said—it was nae play,
I winna ventur't in my rhymes.
A lassie all alone, etc.

A VISION.²⁵⁷

As I stood by yon roofless tower,
Where the wa'flower scents the dewy air,
Where the howlet mourns in her ivy bower,
And tells the midnight moon her care

The winds were laid, the air was still,
The stars they shot along the sky ;
The fox was howling on the hill,
And the distant echoing glens reply

The stream, adown its hazelly path,
Was rushing by the ruin'd walls,
To join yon river on the Strath,
Whase distant roaring swells and falls.

The cauld blae North was streaming forth
Her lights, wi' hissing, eerie dunc,
Athwart the lift they start and shift.
Like Fortune's favors, tint as win.

By heedless chance I turn'd my eyes,
And, by the moonbeam, shook to see
A stern and stalwart ghaist arise,
Attir'd as Minstrels wont to be.

Had I statue been o' stane,
His daring look had daunted me ;
And on his bonnet grav'd was plain,
The sacred posy—" LIBERTIE !"

And frae his harp sic strains did flow,
Might rous'd the slumb'ring Dead to hear ,
But oh, it was a tale of woe,
As ever met a Briton's ear!

He sang wi' joy his former day,
He, weeping, wailed his latter times ;
But what he said—it was nae play,
I winna ventur't in my rhymes.

MY LOVE IS LIKE A RED, RED ROSE.

My Luve is like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June :
My Luve is like the melodie,
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
So deep in luve am I ;
And I will luve thee still, my Dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my Dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun ;
And I will luve thee still, my Dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare-thee-well, my only Luve!
And fare-thee-well, a while !
And I will come again, my Luve,
Tho' 'twere ten thousand mile !

YOUNG JAMIE.

YOUNG JAMIE, pride of a' the plain,
Sae gallant and sae gay a swain,
Thro' a' our lasses he did rove,
And reign'd resistless King of Love.

But now, wi' sighs and starting tears,
He strays amang the woods and breers ;
Or in the glens and rocky caves,
His sad complaining dowie raves :—

“ I wha sae late did range and rove,
And chang'd with every moon my love,
I little thought the time was near,
Repentance I should buy sae dear.

“ The slighted maids my torments see,
And laugh at a' the pangs I dree ;
While she, my cruel, scornful Fair,
Forbids me e'er to see her mar.”

THE FLOWERY BANKS OF CREE.

HERE is the glen, and here the bower
All underneath the birchen shade ,
The village-bell has told the hour,
O what can stay my lovely maid ?

'Tis not Maria's whispering call ;
'Tis but the balmy-breathing gale,
Mixt with some warbler's dying fall,
The dewy star of eve to hail.

It is Maria's voice I hear ;
So calls the woodlark in the grove,
His little, faithful mate to cheer ;
At once 'tis music—and 'tis love.

And art thou come! and art thou true!
O welcome dear to love and me!
And let us all our vows renew,
Along the flowery banks of Cree.

MONODY

ON A LADY FAMED FOR HER CAPRICE.²⁵⁸

How cold is that bosom which folly once fired,
How pale is that cheek where the rouge lately glisten'd ;
How silent that tongue which the echoes oft tired,
How dull is that ear which to flatt'ry so listen'd !

If sorrow and anguish *their* exit await,
From friendship and dearest affection remov'd ;
How doubly severer, Maria, thy fate,
Thou didst unwept, as thou livedst unlov'd.

Loves, Graces, and Virtues, I call not on you ;
So shy, grave, and distant, ye shed not a tear :
But come, all ye offspring of Folly so true,
And flowers let us cull for Maria's cold bier.

We'll search through the garden for each silly flower,
We'll roam thro' the forest for each idle weed ;
But chiefly the nettle, so typical, shower,
For none e'er approach'd her but rued the rash deed.

We'll sculpture the marble, we'll measure the lay ;
Here Vanity strums on her idiot lyre ;
There keen Indignation shall dart on his prey,
Which spurning Contempt shall redeem from his ire.

THE EPITAPH.

Here lies, now a prey to insulting neglect,
What once was a butterfly, gay in life's beam ;
Want only of wisdom denied her respect,
Want only of goodness denied her esteem.

PINNED TO MRS. WALTER RIDDELL'S CARRIAGE

IF you rattle along like your Mistress's tongue,
 Your speed will outrival the dart ;
 But a fly for your load, you'll break down on the road,
 If your stuff be as rotten's her heart.

EPITAPH FOR MR. WALTER RIDDELL

SIC a reptile was Wat, sic a miscreant slave,
 That the worms ev'n d--d him when laid in his grave ,
 " In his flesh there's a famine," a starved reptile cries,
 " And his heart is rank poison !" another replies.

EPISTLE FROM ESOPUS TO MARIA.

FROM those drear solitudes and frowzy cells,
 Where Infamy with sad Repentance dwells ,
 Where turnkeys make the jealous portal fast,
 And deal from iron hands the spare repast ,
 Where truant 'prentices, yet young in sin,
 Blush at the curious stranger peeping in ;
 Where strumpets, relics of the drunken roar,
 Resolve to drink, nay half—to whore no more ;
 Where tiny thieves not destin'd yet to swing,
 Beat hemp for others, riper for the string .
 From these dire scenes my wretched lines I date,
 To tell Maria her Esopus' fate.

" Alas ! I feel I am no actor here !"
 'Tis real hangmen real scourges bear !
 Prepare, Maria, for a horrid tale
 Will turn thy very rouge to deadly pale ;

Will make thy hair, tho' erst from gipsy poll'd,
 By barber woven, and by barber sold,
 Though 'twisted smooth with Harry's nicest care
 Like hoary bristles to erect and stare.

The hero of the mimic scene, no more
 I start in Hamlet, in Othello roar ;
 Or, haughty Chieftain, 'mid the din of arms,
 In Highland bonnet, woo Malvina's charms ;
 While sans-culottes stoop up the mountain high,
 And steal from me Maria's prying eye.
 Blest Highland bonnet ! once my proudest dress,
 Now prouder still, Maria's temples press ;
 I see her wave thy towering plumes afar,
 And call each coxcomb to the wordy war :
 I see her face the first of Ireland's sons,
 And even out-Irish his Hibernian bronze ;
 The crafty Colonel leaves the tartan'd lines,
 For other wars, where he a hero shines :
 The hopeful youth, in Scottish senate bred,
 Who owns a Bushby's heart without the head,
 Comes 'mid a string of coxcombs, to display
 That *veni, vidi, vici*, is his way :
 The shrinking Bard adown the alley skulks,
 And dreads a meeting worse than Woolwich hulks ;
 Though there, his heresies in Church and State
 Might well award him Muir and Palmer's fate :
 Still she undaunted reels and rattles on,
 And dares the public like a noontide sun.
What scandal called Maria's jaunty stagger
 The ricket reeling of a crooked swagger ?
Whose spleen (e'en worse than Burns's venom, when
 He dips in gall unmix'd his eager pen,
 And pours his vengeance in the burning line)—
Who christen'd thus Maria's lyre-divine
 The idiot strum of Vanity bemus'd,
 And even th' abuse of Poesy abus'd ?—

Who called her verse a Parish Workhouse, made
For motley foundling Fancies, stolen or strayed

A Workhouse! ah, that sound awakes my woes,
And pillows on the thorn my rack'd repose!
In durance vile here must I wake and weep,
And all my frowsy couch in sorrow steep;
That straw where many a rogue has lain of yore,
And vermin'd gipsies litter'd heretofore.

Why, Lonsdale, thus thy wrath on vagrants pour
Must earth no rascal save thyself endure;
Must thou alone in guilt immortal swell,
And make a vast monopoly of hell?
Thou know'st the Virtues cannot hate thee worse;
The Vices also, must they club their curse?
Or must no tiny sin to others fall,
Because thy guilt's supreme enough for all?

Maria, send me too thy griefs and cares;
In all of thee sure thy Esopus shares.
As thou at all mankind the flag unfurls,
Who on my fair one Satire's vengeance hurls?
Who calls thee pert, affected, vain coquette,
A wit in folly, and a fool in wit?
Who says that fool alone is not thy due,
And quotes thy treacheries to prove it true?

Our force united on thy foes we'll turn,
And dare the war with all of woman born:
For who can write and speak as thou and I?
My periods that decyphering defy,
And thy still matchless tongue that conquers all reply!

EPITAPH ON A NOTED COXCOMB,

CAPTAIN WM. RODDICK, OF CORBISTON.

LIGHT lay the earth on Billy's breast,
 His chicken heart so tender ;
 But build a castle on his head,
 His *scull* will prop it under.

ON CAPTAIN LASCELLES.

WHEN Lascelles thought fit from this world to depart,
 Some friends warmly thought of embalming his heart ;
 A bystander whispers—" Pray don't make so much o't,
 The subject is poison, no reptile will touch it."

ON WM. GRAHAM, ESQ., OF MOSSKNOWE.

" STOP, thief!" dame Nature called to Death,
 As Willy drew his latest breath ;
 How shall I make a fool again ?
 My choicest model thou hast ta'en.

ON JOHN BUSHBY, ESQ., TINWALD DOWNS.

HERE lies John Bushby—*honest man*,
 Cheat him, Devil—if you can!

SONNET ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT RIDDELL,
 OF GLENRIDDELL AND FRIARS' CARSE.²⁵⁹

No more, ye warblers of the wood! no more ;
 Nor pour your descant grating on my soul ;
 Thou young-eyed Spring! gay in thy verdant stole,
 More welcome were to me grim Winter's wildest roar.

How can ye charm, ye flowers, with all your dyes?
Ye blow upon the sod that wraps my friend!
How can I to the tuneful strain attend?
That strain flows round the untimely tomb where Riddell lies.

Yes, pour, ye warblers! pour the notes of woe,
And soothe the Virtues weeping o'er his bier:
The man of worth—and hath not left his peer!
Is in his "narrow house," for ever darkly low.

Thee, Spring! again with joy shall others greet;
Me, memory of my loss will only meet.

THE LOVELY LASS O' INVERNESS.

THE lovely lass o' Inverness,
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For, e'en to morn she cries "alas!"
And ay the saut tear blin's her e'e.

"Drumossie moor, Drumossie day—
A waefu' day it was to me!
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear, and brethren three.

"Their winding-sheet the bluidy clay,
Their graves are growin' green to see;
And by them lies the dearest lad
That ever blest a woman's e'e!

"Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,
A bluidy man I trow thou be;
For mony a heart thou hast made sair,
That ne'er did wrang to thine or thee!"

CHARLIE, HE'S MY DARLING.²⁶⁰

'Twas on a Monday morning,
Right early in the year,
That Charlie came to our town,
The young Chevalier.

Chorus.—An' Charlie, he's my darling,
My darling, my darling,
Charlie, he's my darling,
The young Chevalier.

As he was walking up the street,
The city for to view,
O there he spied a bonie lass
The window looking through.
An' Charlie, etc.

Sae light's he jumpèd up the stair,
And tirl'd at the pin ;
And wha sae ready as hersel'
To let the laddie in ?
An' Charlie, etc.

He set his Jenny on his knee,
All in his Highland dress ;
For brawly well he ken'd the way
To please a bonie lass.
An' Charlie, etc.

It's up yon heathery mountain,
An' down yon scroggie glen,
We daur na gang a milking,
For Charlie and his men.
An' Charlie, etc.

BANNOCKS O' BEAR MEAL.

Chorus.—Bannocks o' bear meal,
Bannocks o' barley,
Here's to the Highlandman's
Bannocks o' barley!

WHA, in a brulyie, will
First cry "A parley?"
Never the lads wi' the
Bannocks o' barley.
Bannocks o' bear meal, etc.

Wha, in his wae days,
Were loyal to Charlie?
Wha but the lads wi' the
Bannocks o' barley!
Bannocks o' bear meal, etc.

THE HIGHLAND BALOU.

HEE balou, my sweet wee Donald,
Picture o' the great Clanronald;
Brawlie kens our wanton Chief
Wha gat my young Highland thief.

Leeze me on thy bonie craigie,
An' thou live, thou'll steal a naigie,
Travel the country thro' and thro',
And bring hame a Carlisle cow.

Thro' the Lawlands, o'er the Border,
Weel, my babie, may thou further!
Harry the louns o' the laigh Countrie,
Syne to the Highlands hame to me.

THE HIGHLAND WIDOW'S LAMENT.

OH I am come to the low Countrie,
Ochon, Ochon, Ochrie!
Without a penny in my purse,
To buy a meal to me.

It was na sae in the Highland hills,
Ochon, Ochon, Ochrie!
Nae woman in the Country wide,
Sae happy was as me.

For then I had a score o' kye,
Ochon, Ochon, Ochrie!
Feeding on yon hill sae high,
And giving milk to me.

And there I had three score o' yowes,
Ochon, Ochon, Ochrie!
Skipping on yon bonie knowes,
And casting woo to me.

I was the happiest of a' the Clan,
Sair, sair may I repine ;
For Donald was the brawest man,
And Donald he was mine.

Till Charlie Stewart cam at last,
Sae far to set us free ;
My Donald's arm was wanted then,
For Scotland and for me.

Their waefu' fate what need I tell,
Right to the wrang did yield ;
My Donald and his country fell,
Upon Culloden field.

Ochon! O Donald, oh!
Ochon, Ochon, Ochrie!
Nae woman in the world wide,
Sae wretched now as me.

IT WAS A' FOR OUR RIGHTFU' KING.²⁸¹

It was a' for our rightfu' King
We left fair Scotland's strand;
It was a' for our rightfu' King
We e'er saw Irish land, my dear,
We e'er saw Irish land.

Now a' is done that men can do,
And a' is done in vain;
My Love and Native Land fareweel,
For I maun cross the main, my dear,
For I maun cross the main

He turn'd him right and round about,
Upon the Irish shore;
And gae his bridle reins a shake,
With adieu for evermore, my dear,
And adieu for evermore.

The soger frae the war returns,
The sailor frae the main,
But I hae parted frae my Love,
Never to meet again, my dear,
Never to meet again.

When day is gane, and night is come,
And a' folk bound to sleep;
I think on him that's far awa',
The lee-lang night and weep, my dear,
The lee-lang night and weep.

ODE FOR GENERAL WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY.

No Spartan tube, no Attic shell,
No lyre Æolian I awake ;
'Tis Liberty's bold note I swell,
Thy harp, Columbia, let me take !
See gathering thousands, while I sing,
A broken chain exulting bring,
And dash it in a tyrant's face,
And dare him to his very beard,
And tell him he no more is feared—
No more the despot of Columbia's race !
A tyrant's proudest insults brav'd,
They shout—a People freed ! They hail an Empire saved.

Where is man's godlike form ?
Where is that brow erect and bold—
That eye that can unmov'd behold
The wildest rage, the loudest storm
That e'er created fury dared to raise ?
Avaunt ! thou caitiff, servile, base,
That tremblest at a despot's nod,
Yet, crouching under the iron rod,
Canst laud the hand that struck th' insulting blow !
Art thou of man's Imperial line ?
Dost boast that countenance divine ?
Each skulking feature answers, No !
But come, ye sons of Liberty,
Columbia's offspring, brave as free,
In danger's hour still flaming in the van,
Ye know, and dare maintain, the Royalty of Man !

Alfred ! on thy starry throne,
Surrounded by the tuneful choir,
The bards that erst have struck the patriot lyre,
And rous'd the freeborn Briton's soul of fire,
No more thy England own !

Dare injured nations form the great design,
 To make detested tyrants bleed '
 Thy England execrates the glorious deed!
 Beneath her hostile banners waving,
 Every pang of honour braving,
 England in thunder calls, "The tyrant's cause is mine!"
 That hour accurst how did the fiends rejoice.
 And hell, thro' all her confines, raise the exulting voice,
 That hour which saw the generous English name
 Linkt with such damned deeds of everlasting shame!

Thee, Caledonia! thy wild heaths among,
 Fam'd for the martial deed, the heaven-taught song,
 To thee I turn with swimming eyes,
 Where is that soul of Freedom fled?
 Immingled with the mighty dead,
 Beneath that hallow'd turf where Wallace lies!
 Hear it not, WALLACE! in thy bed of death.
 Ye babbling winds! in silence weep,
 Disturb not ye the hero's sleep,
 Nor give the coward secret breath!
 Is this the ancient Caledonian form,
 Firm as the rock, resistless as the storm?
 Show me that eye which shot immortal hate,
 Blasting the despot's proudest bearing;
 Show me that arm which, nerv'd with thundering fate,
 Crush'd Usurpation's boldest daring!—
 Dark-quench'd as yonder sinking star,
 No more that glance lightens afar;
 That palsied arm no more whirls on the waste of war.

TO MISS GRAHAM OF FINTRY,
 WITH A COPY OF THOMSON'S "SCOTTISH AIRS."

HERE, where the Scottish Muse immortal lives,
 In sacred strains and tuneful numbers joined,
 Accept the gift; though humble he who gives,
 Rich is the tribute of the grateful mind.

So may no ruffled feeling in thy breast,
Discordant, jar thy bosom-chords among ;
But Peace attune thy gentle soul to rest,
Or Love ecstatic wake his seraph song.

Or Pity's notes, in luxury of tears,
As modest Want the tale of woe reveals ;
While conscious Virtue all the strains endears,
And heaven-born Piety her sanction seals.

ON THE SEAS AND FAR AWAY.²⁶²

Tune—"O'er the hills and far away."

How can my poor heart be glad,
When absent from my sailor lad ?
How can I the thought forego—
He's on the seas to meet the foe ?
Let me wander, let me rove,
Still my heart is with my love ;
Nightly dreams, and thoughts by day,
Are with him that's far away.

Chorus.—On the seas and far away,
On stormy seas and far away ;
Nightly dreams and thoughts by day,
Are ay with him that's far away.

When in summer noon I faint,
As weary flocks around me pant,
Haply in this scorching sun,
My sailor's thund'ring at his gun ;
Bullets, spare my only joy !
Bullets, spare my darling boy !
Fate, do with me what you may,
Spare but him that's far away.

On the seas and far away,
 On stormy seas and far away ;
 Fate, do with me what you may,
 Spare but him that's far away.

At the starless, midnight hour
 When Winter rules with boundless power ;
 As the storms the forests tear,
 And thunders rend the howling air,
 Listening to the doubling roar,
 Surging on the rocky shore,
 All I can—I weep and pray
 For his weal that's far away.

On the seas and far away,
 On stormy seas and far away ;
 All I can—I weep and pray,
 For his weal that's far away.

Peace, thy olive wand extend,
 And bid wild War his ravage end,
 Man with brother Man to meet,
 And as a brother kindly greet ;
 Then may heav'n with prosperous gales,
 Fill my sailor's welcome sails ;
 To my arms their charge convey,
 My dear lad that's far away.

On the seas and far away,
 On stormy seas and far away ;
 To my arms their charge convey,
 My dear lad that's far away.

CA' THE YOWES TO THE KNOWES.²⁶³

SECOND VERSION.

Chorus.—Ca' the yowes to the knowes,
 Ca' them where the heather grows,
 Ca' them where the burnie rowes,
 My bonie Dearie.

HARK, the mavis' e'ening sang,
Sounding Clouden's woods amang ;
Then a-faulding let us gang,
My bonie Dearie.
Ca' the yowes, etc.

We'll gae down by Clouden side,
Thro' the hazels, spreading wide,
O'er the waves that sweetly glide,
To the moon sae clearly.
Ca' the yowes, etc.

Yonder Clouden's silent towers,
Where, at moonshine's midnight hours,
O'er the dewy bending flowers,
Fairies dance sae cheery.
Ca' the yowes, etc.

Ghaist nor bogle shalt thou fear,
Thou'rt to Love and Heav'n sae dear,
Nocht of ill may come thee near ;
My bonie Dearie.
Ca' the yowes, etc.

Fair and lovely as thou art,
Thou hast stown my very heart ;
I can die—but canna part,
My bonie Dearie.
Ca' the yowes, etc.

SHE SAYS SHE LOES ME BEST OF A'.²⁶⁴

Tune—"Oonagh's Waterfall."

SAE flaxen were her ringlets,
Her eyebrows of a darker hue,
Bewitchingly o'er-arching
Twa laughing e'en o' lovely blue ;

Her smiling, sae wyling,
Wad make a wretch forget his woe;
What pleasure, what treasure,
Unto these rosy lips to grow!
Such was my Chloris' bonie face,
When first that bonie face I saw,
And ay my Chloris' dearest charm
She says she lo'es me best of a'.

Like harmony her motion,
Her pretty ankle is a spy
Betraying fair proportion,
Wad make a saint forget the sky:
Sae warming, sae charming,
Her faultless form and gracefu' air;
Ilk feature—auld Nature
Declar'd that she could do nae mair:
Hers are the willing chains o' love,
By conquering Beauty's sovereign law;
And still my Chloris' dearest charm—
She says she lo'es me best of a'.

Let others love the city,
And gaudy show, at sunny noon;
Gie me the lonely valley,
The dewy eve, and rising moon,
Fair beaming, and streaming,
Her silver light the boughs amang;
While falling, recalling,
The amorous thrush concludes his sang:
Then, dearest Chloris, wilt thou rove,
By wimpling burn and leafy shaw,
And hear my vows o' truth and love,
And say thou lo'es me best of a'.

TO DR. MAXWELL,
ON MISS JESSIE STAIG'S RECOVERY.
MAXWELL, if here you merit crave,
That merit I deny;
You save fair Jessie from the grave!—
An angel could not die!

TO THE BEAUTIFUL MISS ELIZA J—N,
ON HER PRINCIPLES OF LIBERTY AND EQUALITY.
How, Liberty! girl, can it be by thee nam'd?
Equality too! hussey, art not asham'd?
Free and equal indeed, while mankind thou enchainest,
And over their hearts a proud Despot so reignest.

ON CHLORIS ²⁶⁵
REQUESTING ME TO GIVE HER A SPRIG OF BLOSSOMED THORN.
FROM the white-blossom'd sloe my dear Chloris requested
A sprig, her fair breast to adorn:
No, by Heavens! I exclaim'd, let me perish, if ever
I plant in that bosom a thorn!

ON SEEING MRS. KEMBLE IN YARICO.
KEMBLE, thou cur'st my unbelief
Of Moses and his rod;
At Yarico's sweet note of grief
The rock with tears had flow'd.

EPIGRAM ON A COUNTRY LAIRD
NOT QUITE SO WISE AS SOLOMON.
BLESS Jesus Christ, O Cardoness,
With grateful, lifted eyes,
Who taught that not the soul alone,
But *body* too shall rise;

For had He said " The soul alone
From death I will deliver,"
Alas, alas! O Cardoness,
Then hadst thou lain for ever.

ON BEING SHOWN A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY SEAT
BELONGING TO THE SAME LAIRD

We grant they're thine, those beauties all,
So lovely in our eye ;
Keep them, thou eunuch, Cardoness,
For others to enjoy!

ON HEARING IT ASSERTED FALSEHOOD
IS EXPRESSED IN THE REV. DR. BABINGTON'S VERY LOOKS.

THAT there is a falsehood in his looks,
I must and will deny :
They tell their master is a knave,
And sure they do not lie.

ON A SUICIDE.

EARTH'D up, here lies an imp o' hell,
Planted by Satan's dibble ;
Poor silly wretch, he's damned himsel',
To save the Lord the trouble.

ON A SWEARING COXCOMB.

HERE cursing, swearing Burton lies,
A buck, a beau, or " Dem my eyes!"
Who in his life did little good,
And his last words were, " Dem my blood!"

ON AN INNKEEPER NICKNAMED " THE MARQUIS."

HERE lies a mock Marquis, whose titles were sham'd,
If ever he rise, it will be to be damn'd.

ON ANDREW TURNER.

IN se'enteen hunder'n forty-nine,
The deil gat stuff to make a swine,
An' coost it in a corner ;
But wilily he chang'd his plan,
An' shap'd it something like a man,
An' ca'd it Andrew Turner.

PRETTY PEG.

As I gaed up by yon gate-end,
When day was waxin weary,
Wha did I meet come down the street,
But pretty Peg, my dearie !

Her air sae sweet, an' shape complete,
Wi' nae proportion wanting,
The Queen of Love did never move
Wi' motion mair enchanting.

Wi' linkèd hands, we took the sands,
Adown yon winding river ;
Oh, that sweet hour and shady bower,
Forget it shall I never !

ESTEEM FOR CHLORIS.

AH, Chloris, since it may not be,
That thou of love wilt hear ;
If from the lover thou maun flee,
Yet let the *friend* be dear.

Altho' I love my Chloris mair
Than ever tongue could tell ;
My passion I will ne'er declare—
I'll say, I wish thee well.

Tho' a' my daily care thou art,
 And a' my nightly dream,
 I'll hide the struggle in my heart,
 And say it is esteem.

SAW YOU MY DEAR, MY PHILLY.

Tune—"When she cam' ben she bobbet."

O SAW ye my Dear, my Philly?
 O saw ye my Dear, my Philly,
 She's down i' the grove, she's wi' a new Love,
 She winna come hame to her Willy.

What says she my Dear, my Philly?
 What says she my Dear, my Philly?
 She lets thee to wit she has thee forgot,
 And for ever disowns thee, her Willy.

O had I ne'er seen thee, my Philly!
 O had I ne'er seen thee, my Philly!
 As light as the air, and fause as thou's fair,
 Thou's broken the heart o' thy Willy.

HOW LANG AND DREARY IS THE NIGHT.

Tune—"Cauld Kail in Aberdeen."

How lang and dreary is the night
 When I am frae my Dearie;
 I restless lie frae e'en to morn
 Tho' I were ne'er sae weary.

Chorus.—For oh, her lanely nights are lang!
 And oh, her dreams are eerie;
 And oh, her widow'd heart is sair,
 That's absent frae her Dearie!

When I think on the lightsome days
 I spent wi' thee, my Dearie ;
 And now what seas between us roar,
 How can I be but eerie ?
 For oh, etc.

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours ;
 The joyless day how dreary :
 It was na sae—ye glinted by,
 When I was wi' my Dearie !
 For oh, etc.

INCONSTANCY IN LOVE.

Tune—"Duncan Gray."

LET not Woman e'er complain
 Of inconstancy in love ;
 Let not Woman e'er complain
 Fickle Man is apt to rove :
 Look abroad thro' Nature's range,
 Nature's mighty Law is change,
 Ladies, would it not seem strange
 Man should then a monster prove ?

Mark the winds, and mark the skies,
 Ocean's ebb, and ocean's flow,
 Sun and moon but set to rise,
 Round and round the seasons go.
 Why then ask of silly Man
 To oppose great Nature's plan ?
 We'll be constant while we can—
 You can be no more, you know.

THE LOVER'S MORNING SALUTE TO HIS MISTRESS

Tune—"Deil tak the wars."

SLEEP'ST thou, or wak'st thou, fairest creature
Rosy morn now lifts his eye,
Numbering ilka bud which Nature
Waters wi' the tears o' joy.
Now, to the streaming fountain,
Or up the heathy mountain,
The hart, hind, and roe, freely, wildly-wanton stray ;
In twining hazel bowers,
Its lay the linnet pours,
The laverock to the sky
Ascends, wi' sangs o' joy,
While the sun and thou arise to bless the day.

Phœbus gilding the brow of morning,
Banishes ilka darksome shade,
Nature, gladdening and adorning ;
Such to me my lovely maid.
When frae my Chloris parted,
Sad, cheerless, broken-hearted,
The night's gloomy shades, cloudy, dark, o'ercast my sky
But when she charms my sight,
In pride of Beauty's light—
When thro' my very heart
Her burning glories dart ;
'Tis then—'tis then I wake to life and joy !

THE WINTER OF LIFE.

BUT lately seen in gladsome green,
The woods rejoic'd the day,
Thro' gentle showers, the laughing flowers
In double pride were gay :

But now our joys are fled
 On winter blasts awa' ;
 Yet maiden May, in rich array,
 Again shall bring them a'.

But my white pow, nae kindly thowe
 Shall melt the snaws of Age ;
 My trunk of eild, but buss or bield,
 Sinks in Time's wintry rage.
 Oh, Age has weary days,
 And nights o' sleepless pain :
 Thou golden time o' Youthfu' prime,
 Why comes thou not again !

BEHOLD, MY LOVE, HOW GREEN THE GROVES.²⁶⁶

Tune—" My lodging is on the cold ground."

BEHOLD, my love, how green the groves,
 The primrose banks how fair ;
 The balmy gales awake the flowers,
 And wave thy flowing hair.

The lav'rock shuns the palace gay,
 And o'er the cottage sings :
 For Nature smiles as sweet, I ween,
 To Shepherds as to Kings.

Let minstrels sweep the skilfu' strings,
 In lordly lighted ha' :
 The Shepherd stops his simple reed,
 Blythe in the birken shaw.

The Princely revel may survey
 Our rustic dance wi' scorn ;
 But are their hearts as light as ours,
 Beneath the milk-white thorn ?

The shepherd, in the flowery glen ;
In shepherd's phrase, will woo :
The courtier tells a finer tale,
But is his heart as true ?

These wild-wood flowers I've pu'd, to deck
That spotless breast o' thine :
The courtier's gems may witness love,
But, 'tis na love like mine.

THE CHARMING MONTH OF MAY.

SONG, ALTERED FROM AN OLD ENGLISH ONE

It was the charming month of May,
When all the flow'rs were fresh and gay,
One morning, by the break of day,
The youthful, charming Chloe—
From peaceful slumber she arose,
Girt on her mantle and her hose,
And o'er the flow'ry mead she goes—
The youthful, charming Chloe.

Chorus.—Lovely was she by the dawn,
Youthful Chloe, charming Chloe,
Tripping o'er the pearly lawn,
The youthful, charming Chloe.

The feather'd people you might see
Perch'd all around on every tree,
In notes of sweetest melody
They hail the charming Chloe ;
Till, painting gay the eastern skies,
The glorious sun began to rise,
Outrival'd by the radiant eyes
Of youthful, charming Chloe.
Lovely was she, etc.

LASSIE WI' THE LINT-WHITE LOCKS.²⁶⁷

Tune—"Rothiemurchie's Rant."

Chorus.—Lassie wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonie lassie, artless lassie,
Wilt thou wi' me tent the flocks,
Wilt thou be my Dearie, O?

Now Nature cleeds the flowery lea,
And a' is young and sweet like thee,
O wilt thou share its joys wi' me,
And say thou'lt be my Dearie, O.
Lassie wi' the, etc.

The primrose bank, the wimpling burn,
The cuckoo on the milk-white thorn,
The wanton lambs at early morn,
Shall welcome thee, my Dearie, O.
Lassie wi' the, etc.

And when the welcome summer shower
Has cheer'd ilk drooping little flower,
We'll to the breathing woodbine-bower,
At sultry noon, my Dearie, O.
Lassie wi' the, etc.

When Cynthia lights, wi' silver ray,
The weary shearer's hameward way,
Thro' yellow waving fields we'll stray,
And talk o' love, my Dearie, O.
Lassie wi' the, etc.

And when the howling wintry blast
Disturbs my lassie's midnight rest,
Enclasp'd to my faithfu' breast,
I'll comfort thee, my Dearie, O.
Lassie wi' the, etc.

He. The bee that thro' the sunny hour
Sips nectar in the op'ning flower.
Compar'd wi' my delight is poor,
Upon the lips o' Philly.

She. The woodbine in the dewy weat,
When ev'ning shades in silence meet,
Is nocht sae fragrant or sae sweet
As is a kiss o' Willy.

Both. For a' the joys, etc.

He. Let fortune's wheel at random rin,
And fools may tyne, and knaves may win,
My thoughts are a' bound up in ane,
And that's my ain dear Philly.

She. What's a' the joys that gowd can gie?
I dinna care a single flie;
The lad I love's the lad for me,
And that's my ain dear Willy.

Both. For a' the joys, etc.

CONTENTED WI' LITTLE AND CANTIE WI' MAIR.

CONTENTED wi' little, and cantie wi' mair,
Whene'er I forgather wi' Sorrow and Care,
I gie them a skelp as they're creepin alang,
Wi' a cog o' gude swats and an auld Scottish sang.

Chorus.—Contented wi' little, etc.

I whyles claw the elbow o' troublesome thought;
But Man is a soger, and Life is a faught;
My mirth and gude humour are coin in my pouch,
And my Freedom's my Lairdship nae monarch dare touch.

Contented wi' little, etc.

A towmond o' trouble, should that be my fa',
A night o' gude fellowship sowthers it a':
When at the blythe end o' our journey at last,
Wha the deil ever thinks o' the road he has past?

Contented wi' little, etc.

Blind Chance, let her snapper and stoyte on her way ;
Be't to me, be't frae me, e'en let the jade gae .
Come Ease, or come Travail, come Pleasure or Pain,
My warst word is : " Welcome, and welcome again !"
Contented wi' little, etc.

FAREWELL, THOU STREAM.

Air—" Nansie's to the greenwood gane."

FAREWELL, thou stream that winding flows
Around Eliza's dwelling ;
O mem'ry ! spare the cruel throes
Within my bosom swelling.
Condemn'd to drag a hopeless chain,
And yet in secret languish ;
To feel a fire in every vein,
Nor dare disclose my anguish.

Love's veriest wretch, unseen, unknown,
I fain my griefs would cover ;
The bursting sigh, th' unweeting groan,
Betray the hapless lover.
I know thou doom'st me to despair,
Nor wilt, nor canst relieve me ;
But, O Eliza, hear one prayer—
For pity's sake forgive me !

The music of thy voice I heard,
Nor wist while it enslav'd me !
I saw thine eyes, yet nothing fear'd,
Till fears no more had sav'd me :
Th' unwary sailor thus, aghast,
The wheeling torrent viewing,
'Mid circling horrors sinks at last,
In overwhelming ruin.

CANST THOU LEAVE ME THUS, MY KATIE? ²⁶⁸

Tune—Roy's Wife."

Chorus.—Canst thou leave me thus, my Katie?
Canst thou leave me thus, my Katie?
Well thou know'st my aching heart,
And canst thou leave me thus, for pity?

Is this thy plighted, fond regard,
Thus cruelly to part, my Katie?
Is this thy faithful swain's reward—
An aching, broken heart, my Katie?
Canst thou leave me, etc.

Farewell! and ne'er such sorrows tear
That fickle heart of thine, my Katie!
Thou mayest find those will love thee dear,
But not a love like mine, my Katie.
Canst thou leave me, etc.

MY NANIE'S AWA'.²⁶⁹

Tune—"There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame."

NOW in her green mantle blythe Nature arrays,
And listens the lambkins that bleat o'er the braes,
While birds warble welcome in ilka green shaw,
But to me it's delightless—my Nanie's awa'.

The snawdrap and primrose our woodlands adorn,
And violets bathe in the weat o' the morn;
They pain my sad bosom, sae sweetly they blaw,
They mind me o' Nanie—and Nanie's awa'.

Thou lav'rock that springs frae the dews of the lawn,
The shepherd to warn o' the grey-breaking dawn,
And thou mellow mavis that hails the night-fa',
Give over for pity—my Nanie's awa'

Come Autumn, sae pensive, in yellow and grey,
And soothe me wi' tidings o' Nature's decay.
The dark, dreary Winter, and wild-driving snaw
Alane can delight me—now Nanie's awa'.

THE TEAR-DROP.

WAE is my heart, and the tear's in my e'e ;
Lang, lang has Joy been a stranger to me .
Forsaken and friendless, my burden I bear.
And the sweet voice o' Pity ne'er sounds in my ear

Love, thou hast pleasures, and deep hae I luv'd ,
Love, thou hast sorrows, and sair hae I pruv'd ;
But this bruised heart that now bleeds in my breast,
I can feel by its throbbings, will soon be at rest.

Oh, if I were—where happy I hae been—
Down by yon stream, and yon bonie castle-green ;
For there he is wand'ring and musing on me,
Wha wad soon dry the tear-drop that clings to my e'e.

FOR THE SAKE O' SOMEBODY.²⁷⁰

MY heart is sair—I dare na tell,
My heart is sair for Somebody ;
I could wake a winter night
For the sake o' Somebody.
O-hon! for Somebody!
O-hey! for Somebody!
I could range the world around,
For the sake o' Somebody.

Ye Powers that smile on virtuous love,
 O, sweetly smile on Somebody!
 Frae ilka danger keep him free,
 And send me safe my Somebody!
 O-hon! for Somebody!
 O-hey! for Somebody!
 I wad do—what wad I not?
 For the sake o' Somebody.

A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT.²⁷¹

Tune—"For a' that."

Is there for honest Poverty
 That hings his head, an' a' that;
 The coward slave—we pass him by,
 We dare be poor for a' that!
 For a' that, an' a' that,
 Our toils obscure an' a' that,
 The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
 The Man's the gowd for a' that.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
 Wear hoddin grey, an' a' that;
 Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
 A Man's a Man for a' that:
 For a' that, an' a' that,
 Their tinsel show, an' a' that;
 The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
 Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie ca'd "a lord,"
 Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that;
 Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
 He's but a coof for a' that:
 For a' that, an' a' that,
 His ribband, star, an' a' that;
 The man o' independent mind
 He looks an' laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, an' a' that ;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
Gude faith, he mauna fa' that !
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their dignities, an' a' that ;
The pith o' sense, an' pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may
(As come it will for a' that),
That Sense and Worth o'er a' the earth,
Shall bear the gree, an' a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's comin yet for a' that,
That Man to Man, the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.

CRAIGIEBURN WOOD.

SECOND VERSION.

SWEET fa's the eve on Craigieburn,
And blythe awakes the morrow ;
But a' the pride o' Spring's return
Can yield me nocht but sorrow.

I see the flowers and spreading trees,
I hear the wild birds singing ;
But what a weary wight can please,
And Care his bosom wringing !

Fain, fain would I my griefs impart,
Yet dare na for your anger ;
But secret love will break my heart,
If I conceal it langer.

If thou refuse to pity me,
 If thou shalt love another,
 When yon green leaves fade frae the tree,
 Around my grave they'll wither.

THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT.²⁷²

THE Solemn League and Covenant
 Now brings a smile, now brings a tear ;
 But sacred Freedom, too, was theirs :
 If thou'rt a slave, indulge thy sneer.

TO JOHN SYME OF RYEDALE, WITH A PRESENT OF A DOZEN OF PORTER.

O HAD the malt thy strength of mind,
 Or hops the flavour of thy wit,
 'Twere drink for first of human kind,
 A gift that ev'n for Syme were fit.

JERUSALEM TAVERN, DUMFRIES.

INSCRIPTION ON A GOBLET.

THERE'S Death in the cup, so beware !
 Nay, more—there is danger in touchin' ;
 But who can avoid the fell snare,
 The man and his wine's so bewitchin' !

APOLOGY FOR DECLINING AN INVITATION TO DINE.

NO more of your guests, be they titled or not,
 And cookery the first in the nation ;
 Who is proof to thy personal converse and wit,
 Is proof to all other temptation.

EPITAPH FOR MR. GABRIEL RICHARDSON.

HERE Brewer Gabriel's fire's extinct,
And empty all his barrels:
He's blest—if, as he brew'd, he drink,
In upright, honest morals.

EPIGRAM ON MR. JAMES GRACIE.

GRACIE, thou art a man of worth,
O be thou Dean for ever!
May he be d—d to hell henceforth,
Who fauts thy weight or measure!

INSCRIPTION AT FRIARS' CARSE HERMITAGE.

TO THE MEMORY OF ROBERT RIDDELL.

TO RIDDELL, much lamented man,
This ivied cot was dear;
Wand'rer, dost value matchless worth?
This ivied cot revere.

BONIE PEG-A-RAMSAY.²⁷³

CAULD is the e'enin blast
O' Boreas o'er the pool,
An' dawin it is dreary,
When birks are bare at Yule.

Cauld blaws the e'enin blast,
When bitter bites the frost,
And, in the mirk and dreary drift,
The hills and glens are lost:

Ne'er sae murky blew the night,
 That drifted o'er the hill,
 But bonie Peg-a-Ramsay
 Gat grist to her mill.

OVER SEA, OVER SHORE.

THERE was a bonie lass, and a bonie, bonie lass,
 And she lo'ed her bonie laddie dear ;
 Till War's loud alarms tore her laddie frae her arms,
 Wi' mony a sigh, and a tear.
 Over sea, over shore, where the canons loudly roar,
 He still was a stranger to fear ;
 And nocht could him quail, or his bosom assail,
 But the bonie lass he loed sae dear.

WEE WILLIE GRAY.

WEE Willie Gray, and his leather wallet,
 Peel a willow wand to be him boots and jacket ;
 The rose upon the breer will be him trews an' doublet,
 The rose upon the breer will be him trews an' doublet.

Wee Willie Gray, and his leather wallet,
 Twice a lily-flower will be him sark and cravat ;
 Feathers of a flee wad feather up his bonnet,
 Feathers of a flee wad feather up his bonnet.

AY MY WIFE SHE DANG ME.²⁷⁴

Chorus.—O ay my wife she dang me,
 An' aft my wife she bang'd me,
 If ye gie a woman a' her will,
 Gude faith! she'll soon o'er-gang ye.

ON peace an' rest my mind was bent,
 And, fool I was! I married;
 But never honest man's intent
 Sae cursedly miscarried.
 O ay my wife, etc.

Some sairie comfort at the last,
 When a' thir days are done, man,
 My "pains o' hell" on earth is past,
 I'm sure o' bliss aboon, man.
 O ay my wife, etc.

GUDE ALE KEEPS THE HEART ABOON.

Chorus.—O gude ale comes, and gude ale goes;
 Gude ale gars me sell my hose,
 Sell my hose, and pawn my shoon—
 Gude ale keeps my heart aboon!

I HAD sax owsen in a pleugh,
 And they drew a' weel enough:
 I sell'd them a' just ane by ane—
 Gude ale keeps the heart aboon!
 O gude ale comes, etc.

Gude ale hauds me bare and busy,
 Gars me moop wi' the servant hizzie,
 Stand i' the stool when I hae dune—
 Gude ale keeps the heart aboon!
 O gude ale comes, etc.

STEER HER UP AN' HAUD HER GAUN.

O STEER her up, an' haud her gaun,
 Her mither's at the mill, jo;
 An' gin she winna tak a man,
 E'en let her tak her will, jo.

First shore her wi' a gentle kiss,
 And ca' anither gill, jo ;
 An' gin she tak the thing amiss,
 E'en let her flyte her fill, jo.

O steer her up, an' be na blate,
 An' gin she tak it ill, jo,
 Then leave the lassie till her fate,
 And time nae langer spill, jo :
 Ne'er break your heart for ae rebute,
 But think upon it still, jo :
 That gin the lassie winna do't,
 Ye'll find anither will, jo.

THE LASS O' ECCLEFECHAN.²⁷⁵

Tune—"Jack o' Latin."

GAT ye me, O gat ye me,
 O gat ye me wi' naething ?
 Rock an reel, and spinning wheel,
 A mickle quarter basin :
 Bye attour, my Gutcher has
 A heich house and a laich ane,
 A' forbye my bonie sel,
 The toss o' Ecclefechan.

O haud your tongue now, Lucky Lang,
 O haud your tongue and jauner ;
 I held the gate till you I met,
 Syne I began to wander :
 I tint my whistle and my sang,
 I tint my peace and pleasure ;
 But your green graff, now, Lucky Lang,
 Wad airt me to my treasure.

O LET ME IN THIS AE NIGHT.²⁷⁶

O LASSIE, are ye sleepin yet,
 Or are ye waukin, I wad wit ?
 For Love has bound me hand an' fit,
 And I would fain be in, jo.

Chorus.—O let me in this ae night,
 This ae, ae, ae night ;
 O let me in this ae night,
 I'll no come back again, jo!

O hearst thou not the wind an' weet ?
 Nae star blinks thro' the driving sleet ;
 Tak pity on my weary feet,
 And shield me frae the rain, jo.
 O let me in, etc.

The bitter blast that round me blaws,
 Unheeded howls, unheeded fa's ;
 The cauldness o' thy heart's the cause
 Of a' my care and pine, jo.
 O let me in, etc.

HER ANSWER.

O tell na me o' wind and rain,
 Upbraid na me wi' could disdain,
 Gae back the gate ye cam again,
 I winna let ye in, jo.

Chorus—I tell you now this ae night,
 This ae, ae, ae night ;
 And ance for a' this ae night,
 I winna let ye in, jo.

The snellest blast, at mirkest hours,
 That round the pathless wand'rer pours,
 Is nocht to what poor she endures,
 That's trusted faithless man, jo.
 I tell you now, etc.

The sweetest flower that deck'd the mead,
 Now trodden like the vilest weed—
 Let simple maid the lesson read,
 The weird may be her ain, jo.
 I tell you now, etc.

The bird that charm'd his summer day,
 Is now the cruel Fowler's prey ;
 Let witless, trusting Woman say
 How aft her fate's the same, jo!
 I tell you now, etc.

ILL AY CA' IN BY YON TOWN.²⁷⁷

Air—"I'll gang nae mair to yon town."

Chorus.—I'll ay ca' in by yon town,
 And by yon garden-green again ;
 I'll ay ca' in by yon town,
 And see my bonie Jean again.

There's nane shall ken, there's nane can guess
 What brings me back the gate again,
 But she, my fairest, faithfu' lass,
 And stow'n'ins we sall meet again.
 I'll ay ca' in, etc.

She'll wander by the aiken tree,
 When trystin time draws near again ;
 And when her lovely form I see,
 O haith ! she's doubly dear again.
 I'll ay ca' in, etc.

WAT YE WHA'S IN YON TOWN? *28*

Air—"I'll gang nae mair to yon town."

Chorus.—O wat ye wha's in yon town,
Ye see the e'enin sun upon?
The dearest maid's in yon town,
That e'enin sun is shining on.

Now haply down yon gay green shaw,
She wanders by yon spreading tree,
How blest ye flowers that round her blaw,
Ye catch the glances o' her e'e!
O wat ye wha's, etc.

How blest ye birds that round her sing,
And welcome in the blooming year;
And doubly welcome be the Spring,
The season to my Jeanie dear.
O wat ye wha's, etc.

The sun blinks blythe in yon town,
Among the broomy braes sae green;
But my delight in yon town,
And dearest pleasure, is my Jean.
O wat ye wha's, etc.

Without my Fair, not a' the charms
O' Paradise could yield me joy;
But give me Jeanie in my arms,
And welcome Lapland's dreary sky!
O wat ye wha's, etc.

My cave wad be a lover's bower,
Tho' raging Winter rent the air;
And she a lovely little flower,
That I wad tent and shelter there.
O wat ye wha's, etc.

O sweet is she in yon town,
 The sinkin Sun's gane down upon;
 A fairer than's in yon town,
 His setting beam ne'er shone upon.
 O wat ye wha's, etc.

If angry Fate is sworn my foe,
 And suff'ring I am doom'd to bear;
 I careless quit aught else below,
 But spare, O spare me Jeanie dear.
 O wat ye wha's, etc.

For while life's dearest blood is warm,
 Ae thought frae her shall ne'er depart,
 And she, as fairest is her form,
 She has the truest, kindest heart.
 O wat ye wha's, etc.

BALLADS ON MR. HERON'S ELECTION, 1795.²⁷⁹

BALLAD FIRST.

WHOM will you send to London town,
 To Parliament and a' that ?
 Or wha in a' the country round
 The best deserves to fa' that ?
 For a' that, and a' that,
 Thro' Galloway and a' that,
 Where is the Laird or belted Knight
 That best deserves to fa' that ?

Wha sees Kerroughtree's open yett
 (And wha is't never saw that ?)
 Wha ever wi' Kerroughtree met,
 And has a doubt of a' that ?
 ' For a' that, and a' that,
 Here's Heron yet for a' that !
 The independent patriot,
 The honest man, and a' that.

Tho' wit and worth, in either sex,
Saint Mary's Isle can shaw that,
Wi' Dukes and Lords let Selkirk mix,
And weel does Selkirk fa' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that!
The independent commoner
Shall be the man for a' that.

But why should we to Nobles jouk,
And is't against the law, that ?
For why, a Lord may be a gowk,
Wi' ribband, star, and a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that!
A Lord may be a lousy loon,
Wi' ribband, star and a' that.

A beardless boy comes o'er the hills,
Wi' uncle's purse and a' that ;
But we'll hae ane frae 'mang oursels,
A man we ken, and a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that!
For we're not to be bought and sold,
Like naigs, and nowte, and a' that.

Then let us drink—The Stewartry,
Kerroughtree's laird, and a' that,
Our representative to be,
For weel he's worthy a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that!
A House of Commons such as he,
They wad be blest that saw that.

BALLAD SECOND—ELECTION DAY.

Tune—"Fy, let us a' to the Bridal."

FY, let us a' to Kirkcudbright,
For there will be bickerin' there ;
For Murray's *light horse* are to muster,
And O how the heroes will swear!
And there will be *Murray*, Commander,
And Gordon, the battle to win ;
Like brothers they'll stand by each other,
Sae knit in alliance and kin.

And there will be black-nebbit *Johnie*,
The tongue o' the trump to them a' ;
An he get na Hell for his haddin,
The Deil gets na justice ava ;
And there will be *Kempleton's* birkie,
A boy no sae black at the bane ;
But as to his fine *Nabob* fortune,
We'll e'en let the subject alane.

And there will be Wigton's new Sheriff ;
Dame Justice fu' brawly has sped,
She's gotten the heart of a *Bushby*,
But, Lord ! what's become o' the head ?
And there will be *Cardoness*, Esquire,
Sae mighty in *Cardoness'* eyes ;
A wight that will weather damnation,
The Devil the prey will despise.

And there will be *Douglasses* doughty,
New christening towns far and near ;
Abjuring their democrat doings,
By kissin' the — o' a Peer :
And there will be folk frae *Saint Mary's*,
A house o' great merit and note ;
The deil ane but honors them highly—
The deil ane will gie them his vote !

And there will be *Kenmure* sae gen'rous,
 Whose honor is proof to the storm,
 To save them from stark reprobation,
 He lent them his name in the Firm.
 And there will be lads o' the gospel,
Muirhead, wha's as *gude* as he's *true*,
 And there will be *Buttle's Apostle*,
 Wha's mair o' the black than the blue.

And there will be *Logan M'Dowall*,
Sculdudd'ry an' he will be there,
 And also the *Wild Scot o' Galloway*,
Sogering, gunpowder *Blair*.
 But we winna mention Redcastle,
 The *body*, e'en let him escape!
 He'd venture the gallows for siller,
 An 'twere na the cost o' the rape.

But where is the Doggerbank hero
 That made "Hogan Mogan" to skulk?
 Poor *Keith's* gane to hell to be fuel,
 The auld rotten wreck of a hulk.
 And where is our King's Lord Lieutenant,
 Sae fam'd for his *gratefu'* return?
 The birkie is gettin' his questions
 To say in Saint Stephen's the morn.

But mark ye! there's trusty *Kerroughtrie*,
 Whose honor was ever his law;
 If the Virtues were pack'd in a parcel,
 His worth might be sample for a',
 And strang an' respectfu's his backing,
 The maist o' the lairds wi' him stand;
 Nae gipsy-like nominal barons,
 Wha's property's paper—not land.

And there, frae the Niddisdale borders,
The *Maxwells* will gather in droves,
Teugh *Jockie*, staunch *Geordie*, an' *Wellwood*,
That griens for the fishes and loaves ;
And there will be *Heron*, the Major,
Wha'll ne'er be forgot in the *Greys* ;
Our flatt'ry we'll keep for some other,
HIM, only it's justice to praise.

And there will be maiden *Kilkerran*,
And also *Barskimming's* gude Knight,
And there will be roarin' *Birtwhistle*,
Yet luckily roars i' the right.
And there'll be Stamp Office *Johnie*
(Tak tent how ye purchase a dram !)
And there will be gay *Cassencarry*,
And there'll be gleg Colonel *Tam*.

And there'll be wealthy young *Richard*,
Dame Fortune should hing by the neck,
For prodigal, thriftless bestowing—
His merit had won him respect.
And there will be rich brother *Nabobs*
(Tho' *Nabobs*, yet men not the worst)
And there will be *Collieston's* whiskers,
And *Quintin*—a lad o' the first.

Then hey! the *chaste* Interest o' Broughton,
And hey! for the blessin's 'twill bring ;
It may send *Balmaghie* to the Commons,
In Sodom 'twould make him a king ;
And hey! for the sanctified Murray,
Our land wha wi' chapels has stor'd ;
He foundered his horse among harlots,
But gied the auld naig to the Lord.

BALLAD THIRD.

JOHN BUSHBY'S LAMENTATION.

Tune—"Babes in the Wood."

'Twas in the seventeen hunder year
O' grace, and ninety-five,
That year I was the wae'est man
Of ony man alive.

In March the three-an'-twentieth morn,
The sun raise clear an' bright ;
But oh ! I was a waefu' man,
Ere to-fa' o' the night.

Yerl Galloway lang did rule this land,
Wi' *equal* right and fame,
And thereto was his kinsmen join'd,
The Murray's noble name.

Yerl Galloway's man o' men was I,
And chief o' Broughton's host ;
So twa blind beggars, on a string,
The faithfu' tyke will trust.

But now Yerl Galloway's sceptre's broke,
And Broughton's wi' the slain,
And I my ancient craft may try,
Sin' honesty is gane.

'Twas by the banks o' bonie Dee,
Beside Kirkcudbright's towers,
The Stewart and the Murray there,
Did muster a' their powers.

Then Murray on the auld grey yaud,
Wi' *winged spurs* did ride,
That auld grey yaud a' Nidsdale rade,
He staw upon Nidside.

An there had na been the Yerl himsel,
O there had been nae play ;
But Garlies was to London gane,
And say the kye might stray.

And there was Balmaghie, I ween,
In front rank he wad shine ;
But Balmaghie had better been
Drinkin' Madeira wine.

And frae Glenkens cam to our aid
A chief o' doughty deed ;
In case that worth should wanted be,
O' Kenmure we had need.

And by our banners march'd Muirhead,
And Buittle was na slack ;
Whase haly priesthood nane could stain,
For wha could dye the black ?

And there was grave squire Cardoness,
Look'd on till a' was done ;
Sae in the tower o' Cardoness
A howlet sits at noon.

And there led I the Bushby clan,
My gamesome billie, Will,
And my son Maitland, wise as brave,
My footsteps follow'd still.

The Douglas and the Heron's name
We set nought to their score ;
The Douglas and the Heron's name,
Had felt our weight before.

But thoughtless o' weight had we,
The pair o' lusty lairds,
For building cot-houses sae fam'd,
And christenin' kail-yards.

And then Redcastle drew his sword,
That ne'er was stain'd wi' gore.
Save on a wand'rer, lame and blind,
To drive him frae his door.

And last cam creepin Collieston,
Was mair in fear than wrath;
Ae knave was constant in his mind—
To keep that knave frae scaith.

INSCRIPTION FOR AN ALTAR OF INDEPENDENCE

AT KERROUGHTREE, THE SEAT OF MR. HERON.

THOU of an independent mind,
With soul resolv'd, with soul resign'd,
Prepar'd Power's proudest frown to brave,
Who wilt not be, nor have a slave;
Virtue alone who dost revere,
Thy own reproach alone dost fear—
Approach this shrine, and worship here.

THE CARDIN O'T, THE SPINNIN O'T.

I COFT a stane o' haslock woo,
To mak a wab to Johnie o't;
For Johnie is my only jo,
I lo'e him best of onie yet.

Chorus.—The cardin o't, the spinnin o't,
The warpin o't, the winnin o't;
When ilka ell cost me a groat,
The tailor staw the lynin o't.

For tho' his locks be lyart grey,
 And tho' his brow be beld aboon ;
 Yet I hae seen him on a day
 The pride of a' the parishen.
 The cardin o't, etc.

THE COOPER O' CUDDY.

Tune—"Bab at the bowster."

Chorus.—We'll hide the Cooper behint the door,
 Behint the door, behint the door,
 We'll hide the Cooper behint the door,
 And cover him under a mawn, O

THE Cooper o' Cuddy came here awa',
 He ca'd the girrs out o'er us a' ;
 An' our gudewife has gotten a ca',
 That's anger'd the silly gudeman, O.
 We'll hide the Cooper, etc.

He sought them out, he sought them in,
 Wi' deil hae her! an' deil hae him!
 But the body he was sae doited and blin,
 He wist na where he was gaun, O.
 We'll hide the Cooper, etc.

They cooper'd at e'en, they cooper'd at morn,
 Till our gudeman has gotten the scorn ;
 On ilka brow she's planted a horn,
 And swears that there they sall stan', O.
 We'll hide the Cooper, etc.

THE LASS THAT MADE THE BED TO ME.²⁸⁰

WHEN Januar' wind was blawin cauld,
 As to the north I took my way,
 The mirksome night did me enfauld,
 I knew na whare to lodge till day :

By my gude luck a maid I met,
Just in the middle o' my care,
And kindly she did me invite
To walk into a chamber fair.

I bow'd fu' low unto this maid,
And thank'd her for her courtesie ;
I bow'd fu' low unto this maid,
An' bade her make a bed to me ;
She made the bed baith large and wide,
Wi' twa white hands she spread it down ;
She put the cup to her rosy lips,
And drank—"Young man, now sleep ye soun'."

Chorus.—The bonie lass made the bed to me,
The braw lass made the bed to me,
I'll ne'er forget, till the day I die,
The lass that made the bed to me.

She snatch'd the candle in her hand,
And frae my chamber went wi' speed ;
But I call'd her quickly back again,
To lay some mair below my head :
A cod she laid below my head,
And served me with due respect,
And, to salute her wi' a kiss,
I put my arms about her neck.

"Haud aff your hands, young man!" she said,
"And dinna sae uncivil be ;
Gif ye hae ony luv for me,
O wrang na my virginitie."
Her hair was like the links o' gowd,
Her teeth were like the ivorie,
Her cheeks like lilies dipt in wine,
The lass that made the bed to me :

Her bosom was the driven snaw,
Twa drifted heaps sae fair to see ;
Her limbs the polish'd marble stane,
The lass that made the bed to me.
I kiss'd her o'er and o'er again,
And ay she wist na what to say :
I laid her 'tween me and the wa' ,
The lassie thocht na lang till day.

Upon the morrow, when we raise,
I thank'd her for her courtesie ;
But ay she blush'd and ay she sigh'd,
And said, " Alas, ye've ruined me."
I clasp'd her waist, and kiss'd her syne,
While the tear stood twinkling in her e'e ;
I said, " My lassie, dinna cry,
For ye ay shall make the bed to me."

She took her mither's holland sheets,
An' made them a' in sarks to me ;
Blythe and merry may she be,
The lass that made the bed to me.
The bonie lass made the bed to me,
The braw lass made the bed to me,
I'll ne'er forget till the day I die,
The lass that made the bed to me.

HAD I THE WYTE ? 281

HAD I the wyte, had I the wyte,
Had I the wyte ? she bade me,
She watch'd me by the hie-gate side,
And up the loan she shaw'd me.

And when I wadna venture in,
 A coward loon she ca'd me :
 Had Kirk an' State been in the gate,
 I'd lighted when she bade me.

Sae craftilie she took me ben,
 And bade me mak nae clatter ;
 " For our lang, anshoch, glum gudeman,
 Is o'er ayont the water."
 Whae'er shall say I wanted grace
 When I did kiss and dawte her,
 Let him be planted in my place,
 Syne say I was the fautor.

Could I for shame, could I for shame,
 Could I for shame refus'd her ?
 And wadna manhood been to blame,
 Had I unkindly used her ?
 He claw'd her wi' the ripplin-kame,
 And blae and bluidy bruise'd her ;
 When sic a husband was frae hame,
 What wife but wad excus'd her !

I dighted aye her e'en sae blue,
 An' bann'd the cruel randy,
 And weel I wat, her willin mou
 Was sweet as sugar-candie.
 At gloamin-shot, it was, I wot,
 I lighted—on the Monday ;
 But I cam thro' the Tyseday's dew,
 To wanton Willie's brandy.

DOES HAUGHTY GAUL INVASION THREAT ? 282

Tune—" Push about the Jorum."

DOES haughty Gaul invasion threat ?
 Then let the louns beware, Sir ;
 There's WOODEN WALLS upon our seas,
 And VOLUNTEERS on shore, Sir :

The *Nith* shall run to *Corsincon*,
And *Criffel* sink in *Solway*,
Ere we permit a Foreign Foe
On British ground to rally!
We'll ne'er permit a Foreign Foe
On British ground to rally!

O let us not, like snarling curs,
In wrangling be divided,
Till, slap! come in an *unco loun*,
And wi' a rung decide it!
Be Britain still to Britain true,
Amang ourselves united;
For never but by *British hands*
Maun *British wrangs* be righted!
No! never but by *British hands*
Shall *British wrangs* be righted!

The *Kettle* o' the Kirk and State,
Perhaps a *clout* may fail in't;
But deil a *foreign* tinkler loun
Shall ever ca' a nail in't.
Our FATHER'S BLUDE the *Kettle* bought,
And wha wad dare to spoil it;
By Heav'n's! the sacrilegious dog
Shall fuel be to boil it!
By Heav'n's! the sacrilegious dog
Shall fuel be to boil it!

The wretch that would a *tyrant* own,
And the wretch, his true-born brother,
Who would set the *Mob* aboon the *Throne*,
May they be damn'd together!
Who will not sing "God save the King"
Shall hang as high's the steeple;
But while we sing "God save the King,"
We'll ne'er forget THE PEOPLE!
But while we sing "God save the King,"
We'll ne'er forget THE PEOPLE!

ADDRESS TO THE WOODLARK.

Tune—"Loch Erroch Side."

O STAY, sweet warbling woodlark, stay,
 Nor quit for me the trembling spray,
 A hapless lover courts thy lay,

Thy soothing, fond complaining.
 Again, again that tender part,
 That I may catch thy melting art ;
 For surely that wad touch her heart
 Wha kills me wi' disdainin'.

Say, was thy little mate unkind,
 And heard thee as the careless wind ?
 Oh, nocht but love and sorrow join'd,

Sic notes o' woe could wauken !
 Thou tells o' never-ending care ;
 O' speechless grief, and dark despair :
 For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair !
 Or my poor heart is broken.

ON CHLORIS BEING ILL.²⁸³*Tune*—"Ay wauken, O."

Chorus.—Long, long the night,
 Heavy comes the morrow,
 While my soul's delight
 Is on her bed of sorrow.

CAN I cease to care,
 Can I cease to languish,
 While my darling Fair
 Is on the couch of anguish ?
 Long, long, etc.

Ev'ry hope is fled,
 Ev'ry fear is terror ;
 Slumber ev'n I dread,
 Ev'ry dream is horror,
 Long, long, etc.

Hear me, Powers Divine!
 Oh, in pity, hear me!
 Take aught else of mine,
 But my Chloris spare me!
 Long, long, etc.

HOW CRUEL ARE THE PARENTS.

ALTERED FROM AN OLD ENGLISH SONG.

Tune—"John Anderson, my jo."

How cruel are the parents
 Who riches only prize,
 And to the wealthy booby
 Poor Woman sacrifice!
 Meanwhile, the hapless Daughter
 Has but a choice of strife;
 To shun a tyrant Father's hate—
 Become a wretched Wife.

The ravening hawk pursuing,
 The trembling dove thus flies,
 To shun impelling ruin,
 Awhile her pinions tries;
 Till, of escape despairing,
 No shelter or retreat,
 She trusts the ruthless Falconer,
 And drops beneath his feet.

YONDER POMP OF COSTLY FASHION.²⁸⁴*Tune*—"Deil tak the wars."

MARK yonder pomp of costly fashion
 Round the wealthy, titled bride:
 But when compar'd with real passion,
 Poor is all that princely pride.

Mark yonder, etc. (*four lines repeated*).

What are the showy treasures,
 What are the noisy pleasures,
 The gay, gaudy glare of vanity and art?
 The polish'd jewel's blaze
 May draw the wond'ring gaze;
 And courtly grandeur bright
 The fancy may delight,
 But never, never can come near the heart.

But did you see my dearest Chloris,
 In simplicity's array,
 Lovely as yonder sweet opening flower is,
 Shrinking from the gaze of day.
 But did you see, etc.

O then, the heart alarming,
 And all resistless charming,
 In Love's delightful fetters she chains the willing soul!
 Ambition would disown
 The world's imperial crown,
 Ev'n Avarice would deny,
 His worshipp'd deity,
 And feel thro' every vein Love's raptures roll.

'Twas NA HER BONIE BLUE E'E.

Tune—"Laddie, lie near me."

'Twas na her bonie blue e'e was my ruin,
 Fair tho' she be, that was ne'er my undoin';
 'Twas the dear smile when nae body did mind us,
 'Twas the bewitching, sweet, stoun glance o' kindness,
 'Twas the bewitching, sweet, stoun glance o' kindness.

Sair do I fear that to hope is denied me,
 Sair do I fear that despair maun abide me,
 But tho' fell fortune should fate us to sever,
 Queen shall she be in my bosom for ever:
 Queen shall she be in my bosom for ever.

Chloris, I'm thine wi' a passion sincerest,
 And thou hast plighted me love o' the dearest!
 And thou'rt the angel that never can alter,
 Sooner the sun in his motion would falter:
 Sooner the sun in his motion would falter.

THEIR GROVES O' SWEET MYRTLE.

Tune—"Humours of Glen."

THEIR groves o' sweet myrtle let Foreign Lands reckon,
 Where bright-beaming summers exalt the perfume;
 Far dearer to me yon lone glen o' green breckan,
 Wi' the burn stealing under the lang, yellow broom.
 Far dearer to me are yon humble broom bowers,
 Where the blue-bell and gowan lurk, lowly, unseen:
 For there, lightly tripping, among the wild flowers,
 A-list'ning the linnet, aft wanders my Jean.

Tho' rich is the breeze in their gay, sunny valleys,
 And could Caledonia's blast on the wave;
 Their sweet-scented woodlands that skirt the proud palace,
 What are they?—the haunt of the Tyrant and Slave.
 The Slave's spicy forests, and gold-bubbling fountains,
 The brave Caledonian views wi' disdain;
 He wanders as free as the winds of his mountains,
 Save Love's willing fetters—the chains o' his Jean.

FORLORN, MY LOVE, NO COMFORT NEAR.²⁸⁵

Air—"Let me in this ae night."

FORLORN, my Love, no comfort near,
 Far, far from thee, I wander here:
 Far, far from thee, the fate severe,
 At which I most repine, Love.

Chorus.—O wert thou, Love, but near me!
But near, near, near me,
How kindly thou would'st cheer me,
And mingle sighs with mine, Love.

Around me scowls the wintry sky,
Blasting each bud of hope and joy ;
And shelter, shade, nor home have I ;
Save in these arms of thine, Love.
O wert thou, etc.

Cold, alter'd Friendship's cruel part,
To poison Fortune's ruthless dart--
Let me not break thy faithful heart
And say that fate is mine, Love.
O wert thou, etc.

But, dreary tho' the moments fleet,
O let me think we yet shall meet ;
That only ray of solace sweet
Can on thy Chloris shine, Love!
O wert thou, etc.

WHY, WHY TELL THE LOVER.

Tune—"Caledonian Hunt's delight."

WHY, why tell thy lover
Bliss he never must enjoy ?
Why, why undeceive him,
And give all his hopes the lie ?
O why, while fancy, raptur'd, slumbers,
"Chloris, Chloris," all the theme,
Why, why wouldst thou, cruel,
Wake thy lover from his dream.

THE BRAW WOOPER.²⁸⁶*Tune*—"The Lothian Lassie."

LAST May a braw wooer cam down the lang glen,
And sair wi' his love he did deave me ;
I said there was naething I hated like men—
The deuce gae wi'm, to believe me, believe me ;
The deuce gae wi'm to believe me.

He spake o' the darts in my bonie black e'en,
And vow'd for my love he was diein,
I said he might die when he liket—for Jean—
The Lord forgie me for liein, for liein ;
The Lord forgie me for liein !

A weel-stocket mailen, himsel for the laird,
And marriage aff-hand, were his proffers ;
I never loot on that I kenn'd it, or car'd,
But thought I might hae waur offers, waur offers ;
But thought I might hae waur offers.

But what wad ye think ?—in a fortnight or less—
The deil tak his taste to gae near her !
He up the *Gate-slack* to my black cousin, Bess—
Guess ye how, the jad ! I could bear her, could bear her ;
Guess ye how, the jad ! I could bear her.

But a' the niest week, as I petted wi' care,
I gaed to the tryst o' Dalgarnock ;
And wha but my fine fickle wooer was there,
I glowr'd as I'd seen a warlock, a warlock,
I glowr'd as I'd seen a warlock.

But owre my left shouther I gae him a blink,
Lest neibours might say I was saucy ;
My wooer he caper'd as he'd been in drink,
And vow'd I was his dear lassie, dear lassie,
And vow'd I was his dear lassie.

I spier'd for my cousin fu' couthy and sweet,
 Gin she had recover'd her hearin,
 And how her new shoon fit her auld schachl't feet,
 But heavens! how he fell a swearin, a swearin,
 But heavens! how he fell a swearin.

He beggèd, for gudesake, I wad be his wife,
 Or else I wad kill him wi' sorrow ;
 So e'en to preserve the poor body in life,
 I think I maun wed him to-morrow, to-morrow ;
 I think I maun wed him to-morrow.

THIS IS NO MY AIN LASSIE.²⁸⁷

Tune—"This is no my house."

Chorus.—This is no my ain lassie,
 Fair tho' the lassie be ;
 Weel ken I my ain lassie,
 Kind love is in her e'e.

I SEE a form, I see a face,
 Ye weel may wi' the fairest place ;
 It wants, to me, the witching grace,
 The kind love that's in her e'e.
 This is no my ain, etc.

She's bonie, blooming, straight, and tall,
 And lang has had my heart in thrall ;
 And ay it charms my very saul,
 The kind love that's in her e'e.
 This is no my ain, etc.

A thief sae pawkie is my Jean,
 To steal a blink, by a' unseen ;
 But gleg as light are lover's een,
 When kind love is in the e'e.
 This is no my ain, etc.

It may escape the courtly sparks,
It may escape the learned clerks ;
But weel the watching lover marks
 The kind love that's in her e'e.
 This is no my ain, etc.

O BONIE WAS YON ROSY BRIER.

O BONIE was yon rosy brier,
 That blooms sae far frae haunt o' man ;
And bonie she, and ah, how dear !
 It shaded frae the e'enin sun.

Yon rosebuds in the morning dew,
 How pure, amang the leaves sae green ;
But purer was the lover's vow
 They witness'd in their shade yestreen.

All in its rude and prickly bower,
 That crimson rose, how sweet and fair ;
But love is far a sweeter flower,
 Amid life's thorny path o' care.

The pathless wild, and wimpling burn,
 Wi' Chloris in my arms, be mine ;
And I the world, nor wish, nor scorn,
 Its joys and griefs alike resign.

NOW SPRING HAS CLAD THE GROVE IN GREEN.

INSCRIBED TO ALEXANDER CUNNINGHAM.

Now spring has clad the grove in green,
 And strew'd the lea wi' flowers ;
The furrow'd, waving corn is seen
 Rejoice in fostering showers.

While ilka thing in nature join
Their sorrows to forego,
O why thus all alone are mine
The weary steps o' woe!

The trout in yonder wimplin burn
That glides—a silver dart,
And, safe beneath the shady thorn
Defies the angler's art;
My life was ance that careless stream,
That wanton trout was I;
But Love, wi' unrelenting beam,
Has scorch'd my fountains dry.

That little floweret's peaceful lot,
In yonder cliff that grows,
Which, save the linnet's flight, I wot,
Nae ruder visit knows,
Was mine, till Love has o'er me past,
And blighted a' my bloom;
And now, beneath the withering blast,
My youth and joy consume.

The waken'd lav'rock warbling springs,
And climbs the early sky,
Winnowing blythe his dewy wings
In morning's rosy eye;
As little reck'd I sorrow's power,
Until the flowery snare
O' witching Love, in luckless hour,
Made me the thrall o' care.

O had my fate been Greenland snows,
Or Afric's burning zone,
Wi' man and nature leagu'd my foes,
So Peggy ne'er I'd known!

The wretch whose doom is "hope nae mair,"
What tongue his woes can tell;
Within whase bosom, save Despair,
Nae kinder spirits dwell.

O THAT'S THE LASSIE O' MY HEART.

Tune—"Morag."

O WAT ye wha that lo'es me,
And has my heart a-keeping?
O sweet is she that lo'es me,
As dew's o' summer weeping,
In tears the rosebuds steeping!

Chorus.—O that's the lassie o' my heart,
My lassie, ever dearer;
O she's the queen o' womankind,
And ne'er a ane to peer her.

If thou shalt meet a lassie,
In grace and beauty charming,
That e'en thy chosen lassie,
Erewhile thy breast sae warming,
Had ne'er sic power alarming;
O that's the lassie, etc.

If thou hadst heard her talking
(And thy attention's plighted),
That ilka body talking,
But her, by thee is slighted,
And thou art all-delighted;
O that's the lassie, etc.

If thou hast met this Fair One,
When frae her thou hast parted,
If every other Fair One
But her, thou hast deserted,
And thou art broken-hearted;

O that's the lassie o' my heart,
My lassie, ever dearer ;
O that's the queen o' womanhood,
And ne'er a ane to peer her.

INSCRIPTION.²⁸⁸

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A COPY OF THE LAST EDITION
OF MY POEMS, PRESENTED TO THE LADY WHOM, IN SO MANY
FICTITIOUS REVERIES OF PASSION, BUT WITH THE MOST
ARDENT SENTIMENTS OF REAL FRIENDSHIP, I HAVE SO
OFTEN SUNG UNDER THE NAME OF "CHLORIS."

'TIS Friendship's pledge, my young, fair Friend,
Nor thou the gift refuse,
Nor with unwilling ear attend
The moralising Muse.

Since thou, in all thy youth and charms,
Must bid the world adieu
(A world 'gainst Peace in constant arms)
To join the friendly few.

Since, thy gay morn of life o'er cast,
Chill came the tempest's lour
(And ne'er Misfortune's eastern blast
Did nip a fairer flower).

Since life's gay scenes must charm no more,
Still much is left behind,
Still nobler wealth hast thou in store—
The comforts of the mind!

Thine is the self-approving glow
Of conscious Honor's part ;
And (dearest gift of Heaven below)
Thine Friendship's truest heart.

The joys refin'd of sense and taste,
With every Muse to rove :
And doubly were the Poet blest,
These joys could he improve.

R. B.

LEEZIE LINDSAY.²⁸⁹

Will ye go to the Hielands, Leezie Lindsay,
Will ye go to the Hielands wi' me ?
Will ye go to the Hielands, Leezie Lindsay,
My pride and my darling to be ?

THE WREN'S NEST.²⁹⁰

THE Robin to the Wren's nest
Cam keekin in, cam keekin in ;
O weel's me on your auld pow,
Wad ye be in, wad ye be in ?
Thou's ne'er get leave to lie without,
And I within, and I within,
Sae lang's I hae an auld clout
To rowe ye in, to rowe ye in.

COMIN THRO' THE RYE.²⁹¹

Chorus.—O Jenny's a' weet, poor body,
Jenny's seldom dry ;
She draigl't a' her petticoatie,
Comin thro' the rye.

COMIN thro' the rye, poor body,
Comin thro' the rye,
She draigl't a' her petticoatie,
Comin thro' the rye.



BL.

"Gin a body meet a body
Comin thro' the rye."

Gin a body meet a body
 Comin thro' the rye,
 Gin a body kiss a body,
 Need a body cry?

Gin a body meet a body
 Comin thro' the glen,
 Gin a body kiss a body,
 Need the warld ken?

Chorus.—O Jenny's a' weet, poor body,
 Jenny's seldom dry;
 She draigl't a' her petticoatie,
 Comin thro' the rye.

NEWS, LASSES, NEWS.

THERE'S news, lasses, news,
 Gude news I've to tell!
 There's a boatfu' o' lads
 Come to our town to sell.

Chorus.—The wean wants a cradle,
 And the cradle wants a cod:
 I'll no gang to my bed,
 Until I get a nod.

Father, quo' she, Mither, quo' she,
 Do what you can,
 I'll no gang to my bed,
 Until I get a man.
 The wean, etc.

I hae as gude a craft rig
 As made o' yird and stane;
 And waly fa' the ley-crap,
 For I maun till'd again.
 The wean, etc.

CROWDIE EVER MAIR.²⁹²

O THAT I had ne'er been married,
I wad never had nae care,
Now I've gotten wife an' weans,
An' they cry "Crowdie" ever mair.

Chorus.—Ance crowdie, twice crowdie,
Three times crowdie in a day;
Gin ye "crowdie" ony mair,
Ye'll crowdie a' my meal away.

Waefu' Want and Hunger fley me,
Glowrin by the hallan en' ;
Sair I fecht them at the door,
But ay I'm eerie they come ben.
Ance crowdie, etc.

MALLY'S MEEK, MALLY'S SWEET.

Chorus.—Mally's meek, Mally's sweet,
Mally's modest and discreet ;
Mally's rare, Mally's fair,
Mally's every way complete.

As I was walking up the street,
A barefit maid I chanc'd to meet ;
But O the road was very hard
For that fair maiden's tender feet.
Mally's meek, etc.

It were mair meet that those fine feet
Were weel laced up in silken shoon ;
An' 'twere more fit that she should sit
Within yon chariot gilt aboon.
Mally's meek, etc.

Her yellow hair, beyond compare,
 Comes trinklin down her swan-like neck,
 And her two eyes, like stars in skies,
 Would keep a sinking ship frae wreck.
 Mally's meek, etc.

JOCKEY'S TAEN THE PARTING KISS.

Air—"Bonie lass tak a man."

JOCKEY'S taen the parting kiss,
 O'er the mountains he is gane,
 And with him is a' my bliss,
 Nought but griefs with me remain.
 Spare my Love, ye winds that blaw,
 Plashy sleet and beating rain!
 Spare my Love, thou feath'ry snaw,
 Drifting o'er the frozen plain!

When the shades of evening creep
 O'er the day's fair, gladsome e'e,
 Sound and safely may he sleep,
 Sweetly blythe his waukening be.
 He will think on her he loves,
 Fondly he'll repeat her name;
 For where'er he distant roves,
 Jockey's heart is still the same.

VERSES TO COLLECTOR MITCHELL.

FRIEND of the Poet, tried and leal,
 Wha, wanting thee, might beg or steal;
 Alake, alake, the meikle deil
 Wi' a' his witches
 Are at it, skelpin, jig and reel,
 In my poor pouches!

I modestly fu' fain wad hint it,
 That *One-pound-one*, I sairly want it ;
 If wi' the hizzie down ye sent it,
 It would be kind ;
 And while my heart wi' life-blood dunted,
 I'd bear't in mind.

So may the Auld year gang out moanin
 To see the New come laden, groanin,
 Wi' double plenty o'er the loanin,
 To thee and thine :
 Domestic peace and comforts crownin
 The hale design.

POSTSCRIPT.

Ye've heard this while how I've been licket,
 And by fell Death was nearly nicket ;
 Grim loon ! he got me by the fecket,
 And sair me sheuk ;
 But by gude luck I lap a wicket,
 And turn'd a neuk.

But by that health, I've got a share o't,
 And by that life, I'm promis'd mair o't,
 My hale and weel, I'll take a care o't,
 A tentier way ;
 Then farewell folly, hide and hair o't,
 For ance and ay !

THE DEAN OF FACULTY.²⁹³

A NEW BALLAD.

Tune—"The Dragon of Wantley."

DIRE was the hate at old Harlaw,
 That Scot to Scot did carry ;
 And dire the discord Langside saw
 For beauteous, hapless Mary :

But Scot to Scot ne'er met so hot,
Or were more in fury seen, Sir,
Than 'twixt Hal and Bob for the famous job,
Who should be the Faculty's Dean, Sir.

This Hal for genius, wit and lore,
Among the first was number'd ;
But pious Bob, 'mid learning's store,
Commandment the tenth remember'd :
Yet simple Bob the victory got,
And wan his heart's desire,
Which shows that Heaven can boil the pot,
Tho' the Deil piss in the fire.

Squire Hal, besides, had in this case
Pretensions rather brassy ;
For talents, to deserve a place,
Are qualifications saucy.
So their worships of the Faculty,
Quite sick of merit's rudeness,
Chose one who should owe it all, d'ye see,
To their gratis grace and goodness

As once on Pisgah purg'd was the sight
Of a son of Circumcision,
So may be, on this Pisgah height,
Bob's purblind mental vision—
Nay, Bobby's *mouth* may be open'd yet,
Till for eloquence you hail him,
And swear that he has the angel met
That met the ass of Balaam.

In your heretic sins may you live and die,
Ye heretic Eight-and-Thirty!
But accept, ye sublime Majority,
My congratulations hearty.

With your honors, as with a certain king,
In your servants this is striking,
The more incapacity they bring,
The more they're to your liking.

EPISTLE TO COLONEL DE PEYSTER.²⁹⁴

MY honor'd Colonel, deep I feel
Your interest in the Poet's weal ;
Ah! now sma' heart hae I to speel
The steep Parnassus,
Surrounded thus by bolus pill,
And potion glasses

O what a canty warld were it,
Would pain and care and sickness spare it ;
And Fortune favor worth and merit
As they deserve ;
And ay rowth o' roast-beef and claret,
Syne, wha wad starve '

Dame Life, tho' fiction out may trick her,
And in paste gems and frippery deck her ;
Oh! flickering, feeble, and unsicker
I've found her still,
Ay wavering like the willow-wicker,
'Tween good and ill.

Then that curst carmagnole, auld Satan,
Watches like baudrons by a ratton
Our sinfu' saul to get a claut on,
Wi' felon ire ;
Syne, whip! his tail ye'll ne'er cast saut on,
He's aff like fire.

Ah Nick! ah Nick! it is na fair.
First showing us the tempting ware,
Bright wines, and bonie lasses rare,
 To put us daft ;
Syne weave, unseen, thy spider snare
 O hell's damned waft.

Poor Man, the flie, aft bizzes by,
And aft, as chance he comes thee nigh,
Thy damn'd auld elbow yeuks wi' joy
 And hellish pleasure ;
Already in thy fancy's eye,
 Thy sicker treasure.

Soon, heels o'er gowdie, in he gangs,
And, like a sheep-head on a tangs,
Thy gurning laugh enjoys his pangs,
 And murdering wrestle,
As, dangling in the wind, he hangs
 A gibbet's tassle.

But lest you think I am uncivil,
To plague you with this draunting drivel,
Abjuring a' intentions evil,
 I quat my pen,
The Lord preserve us frae the devil!
 Amen! Amen!

A LASS WI' A TOCHER.

Tune—"Ballinamona Ora."

AWA' wi' your witchcraft o' Beauty's alarms,
The slender bit Beauty you grasp in your arms,
O, gie me the lass that has acres o' charms,
O, gie me the lass wi' the weel-stockit farms.

Chorus.—Then hey, for a lass wi' a tocher,
 Then hey, for a lass wi' a tocher ;
 Then hey, for a lass wi' a tocher ;
 The nice yellow guineas for me.

Your Beauty's a flower, in the morning that blows,
 And withers the faster, the faster it grows :
 But the rapturous charm o' the bonie green knowes,
 Ilk spring they're new deckit wi' bonie white yowes.
 Then hey, for a lass, etc.

And e'en when this Beauty your bosom hath blest,
 The brightest o' Beauty may cloy when possess'd ,
 But the sweet, yellow darlings wi' Geordie impress'd,
 The langer ye hae them, the mair they're carest.
 Then hey, for a lass, etc.

HERON ELECTION BALLAD, NO. IV.²⁹⁵

THE TROGGER.

Tune—“ Buy Broom Besoms.”

WHA will buy my troggin, fine election ware,
 Broken trade o' Broughton, a' in high repair ?

Chorus.—Buy braw troggin frae the banks o' Dee ;
 Wha wants troggin let him come to me.

There's a noble Earl's fame and high renown,
 For an auld sang—it's thought the gudes were stown—
 Buy braw troggin, etc.

Here's the worth o' Broughton in a needle's e'e ;
 Here's a reputation tint by Balmaghie.
 Buy braw troggin, etc.

Here's its stuff and lining, Cardoness's head,
Fine for a soger, a' the wale o' lead.
Buy braw troggin, etc.

Here a little wadset, Buittle's scrap o' truth,
Pawn'd in a gin-shop, quenching holy drouth.
Buy braw troggin, etc.

Here's an honest conscience might a prince adorn ;
Frae the downs o' Tinwald, so was never worn.
Buy braw troggin, etc.

Here's armorial bearings frae the manse o' Urr ;
The crest, a sour crab-apple, rotten at the core.
Buy braw troggin, etc.

Here is Satan's picture, like a bizzard gled,
Pouncing poor Redcastle, sprawling like a taed.
Buy braw troggin, etc.

Here's the font where Douglas stane and mortar names ;
Lately used at Caily christening Murray's crimes.
Buy braw troggin, etc.

Here's the worth and wisdom Collieston can boast ;
By a thievish midge they had been nearly lost.
Buy braw troggin, etc.

Here is Murray's fragments o' the Ten Commands ;
Gifted by black Jock to get them aff his hands.
Buy braw troggin, etc.

Saw ye e'er sic troggin ' if to buy ye're slack,
Hornie's turnin chapman—he'll buy a' the pack.
Buy braw troggin, etc.

EPITAPH ON THE AUTHOR.²⁹⁶

HE who of Rankine sang, lies stiff and dead,
And a green grassy hillock hides his head ;
Alas ! alas ! a devilish change indeed !

VERSICLES TO JESSIE LEWARS.²⁹⁷

THE TOAST.

FILL me with the rosy wine,
Call a toast, a toast divine ;
Give the Poet's darling flame,
Lovely Jessie be her name ;
Then thou mayest freely boast,
Thou hast given a peerless toast.

THE MENAGERIE.

Talk not to me of savages
From Afric's burning sun ;
No savage e'er could rend my heart
As, Jessie, thou hast done :
But Jessie's lovely hand in mine,
A mutual faith to plight,
Not even to view the heavenly choir
Would be so blest a sight.

JESSIE'S ILLNESS.

Say, sages, what's the charm on earth
Can turn Death's dart aside !
It is not purity and worth,
Else Jessie had not died.

ON HER RECOVERY.

But rarely seen since Nature's birth,
The natives of the sky ;
Yet still one seraph's left on earth,
For Jessie did not die.

LAY THY LOOF IN MINE, LASS.

Chorus.—O lay thy loof in mine, lass,
In mine, lass, in mine, lass ;
And swear on thy white hand, lass,
That thou wilt be my ain.

A SLAVE to Love's unbounded sway,
He aft has wrought me meikle wae ;
But now he is my deadly fae,
Unless thou be my ain.
O lay thy loof, etc.

There's mony a lass has broke my rest,
That for a blink I hae lo'ed best ;
But thou art Queen within my breast,
For ever to remain.
O lay thy loof, etc.

A HEALTH TO ANE I LOE DEAR.

Chorus.—Here's a health to ane I loe dear,
Here's a health to ane I loe dear ;
Thou art sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet,
And soft as their parting tear—Jessie.

ALTHO' thou maun never be mine,
Altho' even hope is denied ;
'Tis sweeter for thee despairing,
Than aught in the world beside—Jessie.
Here's a health, etc.

I mourn thro' the gay, gaudy day,
As hopeless I muse on thy charms ;
But welcome the dream o' sweet slumber,
For then I am lockt in thine arms—Jessie
Here's a health, etc.

I guess by the dear angel smile,
 I guess by the love-rolling e'e ;
 But why urge the tender confession,
 'Gainst Fortune's fell, cruel decree—Jessie?
 Here's a health, etc.

O WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST.²⁹⁸

O WERT thou in the cauld blast,
 On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
 My plaidie to the angry airt,
 I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee ;
 Or did Misfortune's bitter storms
 Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
 Thy bield should be my bosom,
 To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
 Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
 The desert were a Paradise,
 If thou wert there, if thou wert there ;
 Or were I Monarch o' the globe,
 Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
 The brightest jewel in my crown
 'Wad be my Queen, wad be my Queen.

INSCRIPTION TO MISS JESSIE LEWARS,²⁹⁹

ON A COPY OF THE SCOTS MUSICAL MUSEUM, IN FOUR
 VOLUMES, PRESENTED TO HER BY BURNS.

THINE be the volumes, Jessie fair,
 And with them take the Poet's prayer,
 That Fate may, in her fairest page,
 With ev'ry kindest, best presage

Of future bliss, enrol thy name :
 With native worth and spotless fame,
 And wakeful caution, still aware
 Of ill—but chief, Man's felon snare ;
 All blameless joys on earth we find,
 And all the treasures of the mind—
 These be thy guardian and reward ;
 So prays thy faithful friend, the Bard.

DUMFRIES, *June 26, 1796.*

FAIREST MAID ON DEVON BANKS.³⁰⁰

Tune—"Rothiemurchie."

Chorus.—Fairest maid on Devon banks,
 Crystal Devon, winding Devon,
 Wilt thou lay that frown aside,
 And smile as thou wert wont to do ?

FULL well thou know'st I love thee dear
 Could thou to malice lend an ear ?
 O did not Love exclaim, "Forbear,
 Nor use a faithful lover so."
 Fairest maid, etc.

Then come, thou fairest of the fair,
 Those wonted smiles, O let me share ;
 And by thy beauteous self I swear,
 No love but thine my heart shall know.
 Fairest maid, etc.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE.

I.

TO MISS ELLISON, OR
ALISON BEGBIE.

[*This and the next two form the earliest letters of the poet that have been preserved. Miss Begbie was the heroine of the song "On Cessnock Banks." She refused to marry Burns, because, ere she formed his acquaintance, her heart had been given to another.*]

LOCHLIE, 1780.

MY DEAR E.,

I do not remember, in the course of your acquaintance and mine, ever to have heard your opinion on the ordinary way of falling in love amongst people of our station in life: I do not mean the persons who proceed in the way of bargain, but those whose affection is really placed on the person.

Though I be, as you know very well, but a very awkward lover myself, yet as I have some opportunities of observing the conduct of others who are much better skilled in the affair of courtship than I am, I often think it is owing to lucky chance more than to good management, that there are not more unhappy marriages than usually are.

It is natural for a young fellow to like the acquaintance of the females, and customary for him to keep them company when occasion serves: some one of them is more agreeable to him than the rest; there is something, he knows not what, pleases him, he knows not how, in

her company. This I take to be what is called love with the greater part of us; and I must own, my dear E., it is a hard game such a one as you have to play, when you meet with such a lover. You cannot refuse but he is sincere, and yet, though you use him ever so favourably, perhaps in a few months, or at furthest in a year or two, the same unaccountable fancy may make him as distractedly fond of another, whilst you are quite forgot. I am aware that perhaps the next time I have the pleasure of seeing you, you may bid me take my own lesson home, and tell me that the passion I have professed for you is perhaps one of those transient flashes I have been describing; but I hope, my dear E., you will do me the justice to believe me, when I assure you that the love I have for you is founded on the sacred principles of virtue and honour, and by consequence, so long as you continue possessed of those amiable qualities which first inspired my passion for you, so long must I continue to love you. Believe me, my dear, it is love like this alone which can render the marriage state happy. People may talk of flames and raptures as long as they please, and a warm fancy, with a flow of youthful spirits, may make them feel something like what they describe; but sure I am the nobler faculties of the mind, with kindred feelings of the heart, can only be the foundation of friendship, and it has always been my opinion that the married life was only friendship in a more exalted degree.

If you will be so good as to grant my wishes, and it shall please Providence to spare us to the latest period of life, I can look forward and see that even then, though bent down with wrinkled age—even then, when all other worldly circumstances will be indifferent to me—I will regard my E. with the tenderest affection; and for this plain reason, because she is still possessed of these noble qualities, improved to a much higher degree, which first inspired my affection for her.

"O happy state! when souls each other draw,
When love is liberty, and nature law."

I know, were I to speak in such a style to many a girl, who thinks herself possessed of no small share of sense, she would think it ridiculous; but the language of the heart is, my dear E., the only courtship I shall ever use to you.

When I look over what I have written, I am sensible that it is vastly different from the ordinary style of courtship, but I shall make no apology—I know your good nature will excuse what your good sense may see amiss.—R. B.

II.

TO THE SAME.

LOCHLIE, 1780.

I VERILY believe, my dear E., that the pure, genuine feelings of love are as rare in the world as the pure, genuine principles of virtue and piety. This I hope will account for the uncommon style of all my letters to you. By uncommon, I mean their being written in such a serious manner, which, to tell you the truth, has made me often afraid lest you should take me for some zealous bigot, who conversed with his mistress as he would converse with his minister. I don't know how it is, my dear; for though, except your

company, there is nothing on earth gives me so much pleasure as writing to you, yet it never gives me those giddy raptures so much talked of among lovers. I have often thought that if a well-grounded affection be not really a part of virtue, 'tis something extremely akin to it. Whenever the thought of my E. warms my heart, every feeling of humanity, every principle of generosity kindles in my breast. It extinguishes every dirty spark of malice and envy which are but too apt to infest me. I grasp every creature in the arms of universal benevolence, and equally participate in the pleasures of the happy, and sympathise with the miseries of the unfortunate. I assure you, my dear, I often look up to the Divine Disposer of events with an eye of gratitude for the blessing which I hope He intends to bestow on me in bestowing you. I sincerely wish that He may bless my endeavours to make your life as comfortable and happy as possible, both in sweetening the rougher parts of my natural temper, and bettering the unkindly circumstances of my fortune. This, my dear, is a passion, at least in my view, worthy of a man, and I will add, worthy of a Christian. The sordid earth-worm may profess love to a woman's person, whilst in reality his affection is centred in her pocket: and the slavish drudge may go a-wooing as he goes to the horse-market to choose one who is stout and firm, and, as we may say of an old horse, one who will be a good drudge and draw kindly. I disdain their dirty, puny ideas. I would be heartily out of humour with myself, if I thought I were capable of having so poor a notion of the sex, which were designed to crown the pleasures of society. Poor devils! I don't envy them their happiness who have such notions. For my part I propose quite other pleasures with my dear partner.—R. B.

III.

TO THE SAME.

LOCHLIE, 1781.

MY DEAR E.,

I have often thought it a peculiarly unlucky circumstance in love, that though in every other situation in life telling the truth is not only the safest, but actually by far the easiest way of proceeding, a lover is never under greater difficulty in acting, or more puzzled for expression, than when his passion is sincere, and his intentions are honourable. I do not think that it is very difficult for a person of ordinary capacity to talk of love and fondness which are not felt, and to make vows of constancy and fidelity which are never intended to be performed, if he be villain enough to practise such detestable conduct: but to a man whose heart glows with the principles of integrity and truth, and who sincerely loves a woman of amiable person, uncommon refinement of sentiment, and purity of manners—to such an one, in such circumstances, I can assure you, my dear, from my own feelings at this present moment, courtship is a task indeed. There is such a number of foreboding fears, and distrustful anxieties crowd into my mind when I am in your company, or when I sit down to write to you, that what to speak or what to write I am altogether at a loss.

There is one rule which I have hitherto practised, and which I shall invariably keep with you, and that is, honestly to tell you the plain truth. There is something so mean and unmanly in the arts of dissimulation and falsehood, that I am surprised they can be acted by anyone in so noble, so generous a passion, as virtuous love. No, my dear E., I shall never endeavour to gain your favour by such detestable practices. If you will be so good and so generous as to admit me for your

partner, your companion, your bosom friend through life, there is nothing on this side of eternity shall give me greater transport; but I shall never think of purchasing your hand by any arts unworthy of a man, and I will add, of a Christian. There is one thing, my dear, which I earnestly request of you, and it is this: that you would soon either put an end to my hopes by a peremptory refusal, or cure me of my fears by a generous consent.

It would oblige me much if you would send me a line or two when convenient. I shall only add further that, if a behaviour regulated (though perhaps but very imperfectly) by the rules of honour and virtue, if a heart devoted to love and esteem you, and an earnest endeavour to promote your happiness; if these are the qualities you would wish in a friend, in a husband, I hope you shall ever find them in your real friend and sincere lover.—R. B.

IV.

TO THE SAME.

LOCHLIE, 1781.

I OUGHT, in good manners, to have acknowledged the receipt of your letter before this time, but my heart was so shocked with the contents of it, that I can scarcely yet collect my thoughts so as to write you on the subject. I will not attempt to describe what I felt on receiving your letter. I read it over and over, again and again, and thought it was in the politest language of refusal, still it was peremptory; “you were sorry you could not make me a return, but you wish me,” what, without you, I never can obtain, “you wish me all kind of happiness.” It would be weak and unmanly to say that without you I never can be happy; but sure I am, that sharing life with you

would have given it a relish, that, wanting you, I can never taste.

Your uncommon personal advantages, and your superior good sense, do not so much strike me: these, possibly, may be met with in a few instances in others; but that amiable goodness, that tender feminine softness, that endearing sweetness of disposition, with all the charming offspring of a warm feeling heart—these I never again expect to meet with in such a degree in this world. All these charming qualities, heightened by an education much beyond anything I have ever met in any woman I ever dared to approach, have made an impression on my heart that I do not think the world can ever efface. My imagination has fondly flattered myself with a wish—I dare not say it ever reached a hope—that possibly I might one day call you mine. I had formed the most delightful images, and my fancy fondly brooded over them; but now I am wretched for the loss of what I really had no right to expect. I must now think no more of you as a mistress: still I presume to ask to be admitted as a friend. As such I wish to be allowed to wait on you, and as I expect to remove in a few days a little farther off, and you, I suppose, will soon leave this place, I wish to see or hear from you soon: and if an expression should perhaps escape me rather too warm for friendship, I hope you will pardon it in, my dear Miss—(pardon me the dear expression for once), . . . R. B.

V.

TO HIS FATHER.

IRVINE, *December 27th, 1781.*

HONOURED SIR,

I have purposely delayed writing, in the hope that I should have the pleasure of seeing you on New

Year's Day, but work comes so hard upon us, that I do not choose to be absent on that account, as well as for some other little reasons which I shall tell you at meeting. My health is nearly the same as when you were here, only my sleep is a little sounder, and on the whole I am rather better than otherwise, though I mend by very slow degrees. The weakness of my nerves has so debilitated my mind that I dare neither review past wants, nor look forward into futurity; for the least anxiety or perturbation in my breast produces most unhappy effects on my whole frame. Sometimes, indeed, when for an hour or two my spirits are a little lightened, I *glimmer* a little into futurity; but my principal, and indeed my only pleasurable employment, is looking backwards and forwards in a moral and religious way. I am quite transported at the thought that ere long, perhaps very soon, I shall bid an eternal adieu to all the pains, and uneasinesses, and disquietudes of this weary life; for I assure you I am heartily tired of it, and if I do not very much deceive myself, I could contentedly and gladly resign it

"The soul uneasy, and confined at home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come"

It is for this reason I am more pleased with the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses of the 7th chapter of Revelations, than with any ten times as many verses in the whole Bible, and would not exchange the noble enthusiasm with which they inspire me for all that this world has to offer. As for this world, I despair of ever making a figure in it. I am not formed for the bustle of the busy, nor the flutter of the gay. I shall never again be capable of entering into such scenes. Indeed, I am altogether unconcerned at the thoughts of this life. I foresee that poverty and obscurity probably await me, and I am in some measure

prepared, and daily preparing to meet them. I have but just time and paper to return you my grateful thanks for the lessons of virtue and piety you have given me, which were too much neglected at the time of giving them, but which I hope have been remembered ere it is yet too late. Present my dutiful respects to my mother, and my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Muir; and, with wishing you a merry New Year's Day, I shall conclude. I am, honoured Sir,

Your dutiful Son,

ROBERT BURNES.

P.S. My meal is nearly out, but I am going to borrow till I get more.

VI.

TO MR. JOHN MURDOCH,

SCHOOLMASTER,

STAPLES INN BUILDINGS, LONDON.

[HIS EARLY TEACHER.]

LOCHLIE, 15th January, 1783.

DEAR SIR,

As I have an opportunity of sending you a letter without putting you to that expense which any production of mine would but ill repay, I embrace it with pleasure, to tell you that I have not forgotten, nor ever will forget, the many obligations I lie under to your kindness and friendship.

I do not doubt, Sir, but you will wish to know what has been the result of all the pains of an indulgent father, and a masterly teacher; and I wish I could gratify your curiosity with such a recital as you will be pleased with; but that is what I am afraid will not be the case. I have, indeed, kept pretty clear of vicious habits; and, in this respect, I hope, my conduct will not disgrace the education I have gotten; but, as a man of the world, I am most miserably deficient. One would

have thought that, bred as I have been, under a father who has figured pretty well as *un homme des affaires*, I might have been what the world calls a pushing, active fellow; but to tell you the truth, Sir, there is hardly anything more my reverse. I seem to be one sent into the world, to see and observe; and I very easily compound with the knave who tricks me of my money, if there be anything original about him which shows me human nature in a different light from anything I have seen before. In short, the joy of my heart is to "study men, their manners, and their ways," and for this darling subject, I cheerfully sacrifice every other consideration. I am quite indolent about those great concerns that set the bustling, busy sons of care agog; and if I have to answer for the present hour, I am very easy with regard to anything further. Even the last shift of the unfortunate and the wretched does not much terrify me; I know that even then my talent for what country-folks call "a sensible crack," when once it is sanctified by a hoary head, would procure me so much esteem, that even then—I would learn to be happy. However, I am under no apprehensions about that; for though indolent, yet so far as an extremely delicate constitution permits, I am not lazy; and in many things, especially in tavern matters, I am a strict economist; not, indeed, for the sake of money; but one of the principal parts in my composition is a kind of pride of stomach; and I scorn to fear the face of any man living; above everything, I abhor as hell, the idea of sneaking in a corner to avoid a dun—possibly some pitiful, sordid wretch, who in my heart I despise and detest. 'Tis this, and this alone, that endears economy to me. In the matter of books, indeed, I am very profuse. My favourite authors are of the sentimental kind,

such as Shenstone, particularly his "Elegies"; Thomson; "Man of Feeling"—a book I prize next to the Bible; "Man of the World"; Sterne, especially his "Sentimental Journey"; Macpherson's "Ossian," etc.: these are the glorious models after which I endeavour to form my conduct, and 'tis incongruous, 'tis absurd to suppose that the man whose mind glows with sentiments lighted up at the sacred flame—the man whose heart distends with benevolence to all the human race—he "who can soar above this little scene of things"—can he descend to mind the paltry concerns about which the terræfilial race fret, and fume, and vex themselves? Oh, how the glorious triumph swells my heart! I forget that I am a poor, insignificant devil, unnoticed and unknown, stalking up and down fairs and markets, when I happen to be in them, reading a page or two of mankind, and "catching the manners living as they rise," whilst the men of business jostle me on every side, as an idle encumbrance in their way. But I daresay I have by this time tried your patience; so I shall conclude by begging you to give Mrs. Murdoch—not my compliments, for that were a mere commonplace story, but my warmest, kindest wishes for her welfare—and accept of the same for yourself, from, dear Sir, yours,

R. B.

VII.

TO MR. JAMES BURNES,

WRITER, MONTROSE.

[THE POET'S COUSIN—THE SON OF HIS FATHER'S ELDER BROTHER.]

LOCHLIE, 21st June, 1783.

DEAR SIR,

My father received your favour of the 10th current; and as he has

been for some months very poorly in health, and is in his own opinion (and, indeed, in almost everybody's else) in a dying condition, he has only, with great difficulty, written a few farewell lines to each of his brothers-in-law. For this melancholy reason, I now hold the pen for him to thank you for your kind letter, and to assure you, Sir, that it shall not be my fault if my father's correspondence in the north die with him. My brother writes to John Caird, and to him I must refer you for the news of our family.

I shall only trouble you with a few particulars relative to the wretched state of this country. Our markets are exceedingly high; oatmeal 17d. and 18d. per peck, and not to be got even at that price. We have indeed been pretty well supplied with quantities of white peas from England and elsewhere, but that resource is likely to fail us, and what will become of us then, particularly the very poorest sort, Heaven only knows. This country, till of late, was flourishing incredibly in the manufacture of silk, lawn, and carpet weaving; and we are still carrying on a good deal in that way, but much reduced from what it was. We had also a fine trade in the shoe way, but now entirely ruined, and hundreds driven to a starving condition on account of it. Farming is also at a very low ebb with us. Our lands, generally speaking, are mountainous and barren; and our landholders, full of ideas of farming gathered from the English and the Lothians, and other rich soils in Scotland, make no allowance for the odds of the quality of land, and consequently stretch us much beyond what in the event we will be found able to pay. We are also much at a loss for want of proper methods in our improvements of farming. Necessity compels us to leave our old schemes, and few of us have opportunities of being well

informed in new ones. In short, my dear Sir, since the unfortunate beginning of this American war, and its as unfortunate conclusion, this country has been, and still is, decaying very fast. Even in higher life, a couple of our Ayrshire noblemen, and the major part of our knights and squires, are all insolvent. A miserable job of a Douglas, Heron, & Co's bank, which no doubt you have heard of, has undone numbers of them; and imitating English and French, and other foreign luxuries and fopperies, has ruined as many more. There is a great trade of smuggling carried on along our coasts, which, however destructive to the interests of the kingdom at large, certainly enriches this corner of it, but too often at the expense of our morals. However, it enables individuals to make, at least for a time, a splendid appearance; but Fortune, as is usual with her when she is uncommonly lavish of her favours, is generally even with them at last: and happy were it for numbers of them if she would leave them no worse than when she found them.

My mother sends you a small present of a cheese; 'tis but a very little one, as our last year's stock is sold off; but if you could fix on any correspondent in Edinburgh or Glasgow, we would send you a proper one in the season. Mrs. Black promises to take the cheese under her care so far, and then to send it to you by the Stirling carrier.

I shall conclude this long letter with assuring you that I shall be very happy to hear from you, or any of our friends in your country, when opportunity serves.

My father sends you, probably for the last time in this world, his warmest wishes for your welfare and happiness; and my mother and the rest of the family desire to enclose their kind compliments to you,

Mrs. Burness, and the rest of your family, along with those of,

Dear Sir,
Your affectionate Cousin,
R. B.

VIII.

TO THE SAME.

LOCHLIE, 17th February, 1784.

DEAR COUSIN,

I would have returned you my thanks for your kind favour of the 13th December sooner, had it not been that I waited to give you an account of that melancholy event which, for some time past, we have from day to day expected.

On the 13th current I lost the best of fathers. Though, to be sure, we had long warning of the impending stroke, still the feelings of nature claim their part, and I cannot recollect the tender endearments and parental lessons of the best of friends and ablest of instructors, without feeling what perhaps the calmer dictates of reason would partly condemn.

I hope my father's friends in your country will not let their connection in this place die with him. For my part I shall ever with pleasure, with pride, acknowledge my connection with those who were allied by the ties of blood and friendship to a man whose memory I shall ever honour and revere. I expect, therefore, my dear Sir, you will not neglect any opportunity of letting me hear from you, which will very much oblige, my dear Cousin, yours sincerely,

ROBERT BURNES.

IX.

TO THE SAME.

MOSSGIEL, 3rd August, 1784.

MY DEAR SIR,

I ought in gratitude to have acknowledged the receipt of your last

kind letter before this time; but, without troubling you with any apology, I shall proceed to inform you that our family are all in good health at present, and we were very happy with the unexpected favour of John Caird's company for nearly two weeks, and I must say it of him that he is one of the most agreeable, facetious, warm-hearted lads I was ever acquainted with.

We have been surprised with one of the most extraordinary phenomena in the moral world, which, I daresay, has happened in the course of this half-century. We have had a party of Presbytery Relief, as they call themselves, for some time in this country. A pretty thriving society of them has been in the burgh of Irvine for some years past, till about two years ago a Mrs. Buchan, from Glasgow, came among them and began to spread some fanatical notions of religion among them, and, in a short time, made many converts; and among others their preacher, Mr. White, who, upon that account, has been suspended and formally deposed by his brethren. He continued, however, to preach in private to his party, and was supported, both he and their spiritual mother, as they affect to call old Buchan, by the contributions of the rest, several of whom were in good circumstances; till, in spring last, the populace rose and mobbed Mrs. Buchan, and put her out of the town; on which, all her followers voluntarily quitted the place likewise, and with such precipitation, that many of them never shut their doors behind them; one left a washing on the green, another a cow bellowing at the crib without food, or anybody to mind her; and after several stages, they are fixed at present in the neighbourhood of Dumfries. Their tenets are a strange jumble of enthusiastic jargon; among others, she pretends to give them the Holy Ghost by breathing

on them, which she does with postures and practices that are scandalously indecent; they have likewise disposed of all their effects, and hold a community of goods, and live nearly an idle life, carrying on a great farce of pretended devotion in barns and woods, where they lodge and lie all together, and hold likewise a community of women, as it is another of their tenets that they can commit no moral sin. I am personally acquainted with most of them, and I can assure you the above-mentioned are facts.

This, my dear Sir, is one of the many instances of the folly of leaving the guidance of sound reason and common-sense in matters of religion.

Whenever we neglect or despise these sacred monitors, the whimsical notions of a perturbed brain are taken for the immediate influences of the Deity, and the wildest fanaticism, and the most inconstant absurdities, will meet with abettors and converts. Nay, I have often thought, that the more out-of-the-way and ridiculous the fancies are, if once they are sanctified under the sacred name of religion, the unhappy mistaken votaries are the more firmly glued to them.

I expect to hear from you soon, and I beg you will remember me to all friends, and believe me to be, my dear Sir, your affectionate Cousin,

ROBERT BURNES.

X.

TO MISS —.

AYRSHIRE, 1785.

MY DEAR COUNTRYWOMAN,

I am so impatient to show you that I am once more at peace with you, that I send you the book I mentioned directly, rather than wait the uncertain time of my seeing you. I am afraid I have mislaid or lost Collins' Poems, which I promised to

Miss Irvin. If I can find them, I will forward them by you; if not, you must apologise for me.

I know you will laugh at it when I tell you that your piano and you together have played the deuce somehow about my heart. My breast has been widowed these many months, and I thought myself proof against the fascinating witchcraft; but I am afraid you will "feelingly convince me what I am." I say, I am afraid, because I am not sure what is the matter with me. I have one miserable bad symptom; when you whisper, or look kindly to another, it gives me a draught of damnation. I have a kind of wayward wish to be with you ten minutes by yourself, though what I would say, Heaven above knows, for I am sure I know not. I have no formed design in all this; but just, in the nakedness of my heart, write you down a mere matter-of-fact story. You may, perhaps, give yourself airs of distance on this, and that will completely cure me; but I wish you would not: just let us meet, if you please, in the old beaten way of friendship.

I will not subscribe myself your humble servant, for that is a phrase, I think, at least fifty miles off from my heart; but I will conclude with sincerely wishing that the Great Protector of innocence may shield you from the barbed dart of calumny, and hand you by the covert snare of deceit.—R. B.

XI.

TO MISS KENNEDY

OF DALGARROCK.

Autumn, 1785.

MADAM,

Permit me to present you with the enclosed song, as a small though grateful tribute for the honour of your acquaintance. I have, in these verses attempted some faint sketches

of your portrait in the unembellished manner of descriptive TRUTH. Flattery I leave to your LOVERS, whose exaggerating fancies may make them imagine you still nearer perfection than you really are.

Poets, Madam, of all mankind, feel most forcibly the powers of BEAUTY; as, if they are really PORTS of Nature's making, their feelings must be finer, and their taste more delicate, than most of the world. In the cheerful bloom of SPRING, or the pensive mildness of AUTUMN, the grandeur of SUMMER, or the hoary majesty of WINTER, the poet feels a charm unknown to the rest of his species. Even the sight of a fine flower, or the company of a fine woman (by far the finest part of God's works below), have sensations for the poetic heart that the HERD of men are strangers to. On this last account, Madam, I am, as in many other things, indebted to Mr. H.'s kindness in introducing me to you. Your lovers may view you with a wish, I look on you with pleasure; their hearts, in your presence, may glow with desire, mine rises with admiration.

That the arrows of misfortune, however they should, as incident to humanity, glance a slight wound, may never reach your heart; that the snares of villany may never beset you on the road of life; that INNOCENCE may hand you by the path of HONOUR to the dwelling of PEACE—is the sincere wish of him who has the honour to be, etc.—R. B.

[*The song enclosed was "Young Peggy."*]

XII.

TO MR. JOHN RICHMOND,

EDINBURGH.

MOSSGIEL, February 17th, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have not time at present to upbraid you for your silence and

neglect; I shall only say I received yours with great pleasure. I have enclosed you a piece of rhyming ware for your perusal. I have been very busy with the Muses since I saw you, and have composed, among several others, "The Ordination," a poem on Mr. M'Kinlay's being called to Kilmarnock; "Scotch Drink," a poem; "The Cotter's Saturday Night;" "An Address to the Devil," etc. I have likewise completed my poem on the "Dogs," but have not shown it to the world. My chief patron now is Mr. Aiken in Ayr, who is pleased to express great approbation of my works. Be so good as send me Fergusson, by Connel, and I will remit you the money. I have no news to acquaint you with about Mauchline; they are just going on in the old way. I have some very important news with respect to myself, not the most agreeable—news that I am sure you cannot guess, but I shall give you the particulars another time. I am extremely happy with Smith; he is the only friend I have now in Mauchline. I can scarcely forgive your long neglect of me, and I beg you will let me hear from you regularly by Connel. If you would act your part as a friend, I am sure neither good nor bad fortune should strange or alter me. Excuse haste, as I got yours but yesterday.

I am, my dear Sir, yours,
ROBT. BURNES.

XIII.

TO MR. ROBERT MUIR,

KILMARNOCK.

MOSSGIEL, 20th March, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

I am heartily sorry I had not the pleasure of seeing you as you returned through Mauchline; but as I was engaged, I could not be in town before the evening.

I here inclose you my "Scotch Drink," and "may the — follow with a blessing for your edification." I hope, sometime before we hear the gowk, to have the pleasure of seeing you at Kilmarnock, when I intend we shall have a gill between us in a mutchkin-stoup, which will be a great comfort and consolation to,

Dear Sir, your humble Servant,
ROBERT BURNES.

XIV.

TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ.,

AYR.

MOSSGIEL, 3rd April, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

I received your kind letter with double pleasure, on account of the *second* flattering instance of Mrs. C.'s notice and approbation. I assure you, I

"Turn out the brunt side o' my shin," as the famous Ramsay, of jingling memory, says of such a patroness. Present her my most grateful acknowledgments, in your very best manner of telling truth. I have inscribed the following stanza on the blank leaf of Miss More's works:—

"Thou flattering mark of friendship kind, etc."

My proposals for publishing I am just going to send to the press. I expect to hear from you by the first opportunity.

I am ever, dear Sir, yours,
ROBT. BURNES.

[*This is the last of the poet's letters to which he wrote his name in the old family form—Burness.*]

XV.

TO JOHN BALLANTINE, ESQ.,

BANKER, AYR.

About 14th April, 1786.

HONOURED SIR,

My proposals came to hand last night, and knowing that you

would wish to have it in your power to do me a service as early as anybody, I enclose you half a sheet of them. I must consult you, first opportunity, on the propriety of sending my quondam friend, Mr. Aiken, a copy. If he is now reconciled to my character as an honest man, I would do it with all my soul; but I would not be beholden to the noblest being ever God created, if he imagined me to be a rascal. *Apropos*, old Mr. Armour prevailed with him to mutilate that unlucky paper yesterday. Would you believe it? though I had not a hope, nor even a wish to make her mine after her conduct; yet when he told me the names were cut out of the paper, my heart died within me, and he cut my veins with the news. Perdition seize her falsehood!

ROBT. BURNS.

XVI.

TO JOHN ARNOT
OF DALQUATSWOOD, ESQ.

ENCLOSING A SUBSCRIPTION-BILL
FOR MY FIRST EDITION.

MOSSGIEL, *April*, 1786.

SIR,

I have long wished for some kind of claim to the honour of your acquaintance, and since it is out of my power to make that claim by the least service of mine to you, I shall do it by asking a friendly office of you to me. I should be much hurt, Sir, if anyone should view my poor Parnassian Pegasus in the light of a spur-galled Hack, and think that I wish to make a shilling or two by him. I spurn the thought—

It may do—maun do, Sir, wi' them wha
Maun please the great folk for a wame-fou;
For me, sae laigh I needna bow,
For, Lord be thankit! I can plough;
And when I downa yoke a naig,
Then, Lord be thankit! I can beg.

You will then, I hope, Sir, forgive my troubling you with the enclosed,

and spare a poor heart-crushed devil a world of apologies—a business he is very unfit for at any time; but at present, widowed as he is of every woman-giving comfort, he is utterly incapable of. Sad and grievous friend of late, Sir, has been my tribulation, and many and piercing my sorrows; and had it not been for the loss the world would have sustained in losing so great a poet, I had, ere now, done as a much wiser man, the famous Achitophel of long-headed memory did before me, when “he went home and set his house in order.” I have lost, Sir, that dearest earthly treasure, that greatest blessing here below, that last, best gift, which completed Adam's happiness in the garden of bliss, I have lost—I have lost—my trembling hand refuses its office, the frightened ink recoils up the quill—tell it not in Gath—I have lost—a—a—a wife!

Fairest of God's creation, last and best!
Now art thou lost.

You have doubtless, Sir, heard my story, heard it with all its exaggerations; but as my actions, and my motives for action, are peculiarly like myself, and that is peculiarly like nobody else, I shall just beg a leisure moment and a spare tear of you, until I tell my own story my own way.

I have been all my life, Sir, one of the rueful-looking, long-visaged sons of Disappointment. A damned star has always kept my zenith, and shed its baleful influence, in that emphatic curse of the Prophet, “And, behold, whatsoever he doth, it shall not prosper!” I rarely hit where I aim; and if I want anything, I am almost sure never to find it where I seek it. For instance, if my penknife is needed, I pull out twenty things—a plough-wedge, a horse-nail, an old letter, or a tattered rhyme, in short, everything but my penknife; and that, at last, after a painful, fruitless search, will be found in the unsuspected corner of an unsuspected

pocket, as if on purpose thrust out of the way. Still, Sir, I had long had a wishing eye to that inestimable blessing, a wife. My mouth watered deliciously, to see a young fellow, after a few idle, commonplace stories from a gentleman in black, strip and go to bed with a young girl, and no one durst say black was his eye; while I, for just doing the same thing, only wanting that ceremony, am made a Sunday's laughing-stock, and abused like a pickpocket. I was well aware, though, that if my ill-starred fortune got the least hint of my connubial wish, my schemes would go to nothing. To prevent this, I determined to take my measures with such thought and forethought, such a caution and precaution, that all the malignant planets in the hemisphere should be unable to blight my designs. Not content with, to use the words of the celebrated Westminster Divines, "The outward and ordinary means," I left no stone unturned, sounded every unfathomed depth; stopped up every hole and bore of an objection; but, how shall I tell it! notwithstanding all this turning of stones, stopping of bores, etc.—whilst I, with secret pleasure, marked my project swelling to the proper crisis, and was singing *Te Deum* in my own fancy; or, to change the metaphor, whilst I was vigorously pressing on the siege; had carried the counter-scarp, and made a practicable breach behind the curtain in the gorge of the very principal bastion; nay, having mastered the covered way, I had found means to slip a choice detachment into the very citadel; while I had nothing less in view than displaying my victorious banners on the top of the walls—Heaven and Earth must I "remember"! my damned star wheeled about to the zenith, by whose baleful rays Fortune took the alarm, and pouring in her forces on all quarters, front, flank,

and rear, I was utterly routed, my baggage lost, my military chest in the hands of the enemy; and your poor devil of a humble servant, commander-in-chief forsooth, was obliged to scamper away, without either arms or honours of war, except his bare bayonet and cartridge-pouch; nor in all probability had he escaped even with them, had he not made a shift to hide them under the lap of his military cloak. In short, Pharaoh at the Red Sea, Darius at Arbela, Pompey at Pharsalia, Edward at Bannockburn, Charles at Pultaway, Burgoyne at Saratoga—no Prince, Potentate, or Commander of ancient or modern unfortunate memory ever got a more shameful or more total defeat—

"O horrible! O horrible! most horrible!"

How I bore this can only be conceived. All powers of recital labour far, far behind. There is a pretty large portion of Bedlam in the composition of a poet at any time; but on this occasion I was nine parts and nine-tenths, out of ten, stark, staring mad. At first, I was fixed in stuporific insensibility, silent, sullen, staring like Lot's wife besaltified in the plains of Gomorrah. But my second paroxysm chiefly beggars description. The rifted northern ocean, when returning suns dissolve the chains of winter, and loosening precipices of long accumulated ice tempest with hideous crash the foaming Deep—images like these may give some faint shadow of what was the situation of my bosom. My chained faculties broke loose, my maddening passions, roused to ten-fold fury, bore over their banks with impetuous, resistless force, carrying every check and principle before them. Counsel was an unheeded call to the passing hurricane; Reason, a screaming elk in the vortex of Moskoestrom; and Religion, a feebly-struggling beaver down the roarings

of Niagara. I reprobated the first moment of my existence; execrated Adam's folly-infatuated wish for that goodly-looking, but poison-breathing gift, which had ruined him, and undone me; and called on the womb of uncreated night to close over me and all my sorrows.

A storm naturally overblows itself. My spent passions gradually sank into a lurid calm; and by degrees I have subsided into the time-settled sorrow of the sable widower, who, wiping away the decent tear, lifts up his grief-worn eye to look — for another wife.

"Such is the state of man; to-day he buds
His tender leaves of hope; to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honors thick upon him;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
And nips his root, and then he falls as I do."

Such, Sir, has been this fatal era of my life. "And it came to pass, that when I looked for sweet, behold bitter; and for light, behold darkness."

But this is not all. Already the holy beagles, the houghmagandie pack, begin to sniff the scent, and I expect every moment to see them cast off, and hear them after me in full cry; but as I am an old fox, I shall give them dodging and doubling for it, and by and by, I intend to earth among the mountains of Jamaica.

I am so struck, on a review, with the impertinent length of this letter, that I shall not increase it with one single word of apology; but abruptly conclude with assuring you that I am, Sir, yours and Misery's most humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

XVII.

TO MR. DAVID BRICE,
SHOEMAKER, GLASGOW.

MOSSGIEL, *June 12th, 1786.*

DEAR BRICE,

I received your message by G. Paterson, and as I am not very

throng at present, I just write to let you know that there is such a worthless, rhyming reprobate, as your humble servant, still in the land of the living, though I can scarcely say, in the place of hope. I have no news to tell you that will give me any pleasure to mention, or you to hear.

Poor, ill-advised, ungrateful Armour, came home on Friday last. You have heard all the particulars of that affair, and a black affair it is. What she thinks of her conduct now, I don't know; one thing I do know—she has made me completely miserable. Never man loved, or rather adored, a woman more than I did her; and, to confess a truth between you and me, I do still love her to distraction, after all, though I won't tell her so if I were to see her, which I don't want to do. My poor, dear, unfortunate Jean! how happy have I been in thy arms! It is not the losing her that makes me so unhappy, but for her sake I feel most severely; I foresee she is in the road to—I am afraid—eternal ruin.

May Almighty God forgive her ingratitude and perjury to me, as I from my very soul forgive her; and may His grace be with her and bless her in all her future life! I can have no nearer idea of the place of eternal punishment than what I have felt in my own breast on her account. I have tried often to forget her; I have run into all kinds of dissipation and riots, mason-meetings, drinking matches, and other mischief, to drive her out of my head, but all in vain. And now for a grand cure; the ship is on her way home that is to take me out to Jamaica; and then, farewell, dear old Scotland! and farewell, dear, ungrateful Jean! for never, never, will I see you more.

You will have heard that I am going to commence poet in print; and to-morrow my works go to the press. I expect it will be a volume of about two hundred pages—it is

just the last foolish action I intend to do; and then turn a wise man as fast as possible.

Believe me to be, dear Brice,
Your Friend and Well-wisher,
ROBT. BURNS.

XVIII.

TO JOHN RICHMOND,

EDINBURGH.

MOSSGIEL, 9th July, 1786.

* * *

I have waited on Armour since her return home, not from the least view of reconciliation, but merely to ask for her health, and, to you I will confess it, from a foolish hankering fondness, very ill-placed, indeed. The mother forbade me the house, nor did Jean show that penitence that might have been expected. However, the priest, I am informed, will give me a certificate as a single man, if I comply with the rules of the Church, which for that very reason I intend to do.

I am going to put on sackcloth and ashes this day. I am indulged so far as to appear in my own seat. *Peccavi, pater; miserere me.*

My book will be ready in a fortnight. If you have any subscribers return them by Connell (the carrier). The Lord stand with the righteous. Amen, Amen!

R. B.

XIX.

TO MR. DAVID BRICE,

SHOEMAKER, GLASGOW.

MOSSGIEL, 17th July, 1786.

I HAVE been so throng printing my Poems, that I could scarcely find as much time as to write to you. Poor Armour is come back again to Mauchline, and I went to call for her, and her mother forbade me the house; nor did she herself express

much sorrow for what she has done. I have already appeared publicly in Church, and was indulged in the liberty of standing in my own seat. I do this to get a certificate as a bachelor, which Mr. Auld has promised me. I am now fixed to go for the West Indies, in October. Jean and her friends insisted much that she should stand along with me in the kirk, but the minister would not allow it, which bred a great trouble, I assure you, and I am blamed as the cause of it, though I am sure I am innocent; but I am very much pleased, for all that, not to have had her company. I have no news to tell you that I remember. I am really happy to hear of your welfare, and that you are so well in Glasgow. I must certainly see you before I leave the country. I shall expect to hear from you soon, and am,

Dear Brice, yours,

R. B.

XX.

TO MR. JOHN RICHMOND.

OLD ROME FOREST, 30th July, 1786.

MY DEAR RICHMOND,

My hour is now come—you and I will never meet in Britain more. I have orders, within three weeks at furthest, to repair aboard the *Nancy*, Captain Smith, from Clyde to Jamaica, and to call at Antigua. This, except to our friend Smith, whom God long preserve, is a secret about Mauchline. Would you believe it? Armour has got a warrant to throw me in jail till I find security for an enormous sum. This they keep an entire secret, but I got it by a channel they little dream of; and I am wandering from one friend's house to another, and, like a true son of the Gospel, "have nowhere to lay my head." I know you will pour an execration on her head, but spare the poor, ill-advised girl, for my sake; though may all

the furies that rend the injured, enraged lover's bosom, await her mother until her latest hour! I write in a moment of rage, reflecting on my miserable situation—exiled, abandoned, forlorn. I can write no more. Let me hear from you by the return of coach. I will write you ere I go.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours, here and hereafter,
R. B.

XXI.

TO MR. JOHN KENNEDY,
DUMFRIES HOUSE.

KILMARNOCK, *August, 1786.*

MY DEAR SIR,

Your truly facetious epistle of the 3rd inst. gave me much entertainment. I was sorry I had not the pleasure of seeing you as I passed your way, but we shall bring up all our lee way on Wednesday, the 16th current, when I hope to have it in my power to call on you and take a kind, very probably a last adieu, before I go for Jamaica; and I expect orders to repair to Greenock every day. I have at last made my public appearance, and am solemnly inaugurated into the numerous class. Could I have got a carrier, you should have had a score of vouchers for my Authorship; but now you have them let them speak for themselves.

Farewell, dear Friend! may good luck hit you
And 'mong her favourites admit you!
If e'er Detraction shore to smit you,

May none believe him!
And only de'il that thinks to get you.

Good Lord deceive him.

R. B.

XXII.

TO MONS. JAMES SMITH,
MAUCHLINE.

Monday morning,
MOSSGIEL, *14th August, 1786.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I went to Dr. Douglas yesterday, fully resolved to take the

opportunity of Captain Smith; but I found the Doctor with a Mr. and Mrs. White, both Jamaicans, and they deranged my plans altogether. They assure him that to send me from Savannah-la-Mar to Port Antonio will cost my master, Charles Douglas, upwards of fifty pounds; besides running the risk of throwing myself into a pleuritic fever in consequence of hard travelling in the sun. On these accounts, he refuses sending me with Smith, but a vessel sails from Greenock the first of September, right for the place of my destination. The Captain of her is an intimate friend of Mr. Gavin Hamilton's, and as good a fellow as heart could wish; with him I am destined to go. Where I shall shelter I know not, but I hope to weather the storm. Perish the drop of blood of mine that fears them! I know their worst, and am prepared to meet it:—

"I'll laugh, an' sing, an' shake my leg,
As lang's I drow."

On Thursday morning, if you can muster as much self-denial as to be out of bed about seven o'clock, I shall see you as I ride through to Cumnock. After all, Heaven bless the sex! I feel there is still happiness for me among them:—

"O woman, lovely woman! Heaven designed you
To temper man!—we had been brutes without you!"

R. B.

XXIII.

TO MR. ROBERT MUIR,
KILMARNOCK,

WITH A COPY OF "THE CALF."

MOSSGIEL, *Friday morning,*
[*Sept. 8th, 1786.*]

MY FRIEND AND BROTHER,

Warm recollections of an absent friend presses so hard upon my heart, that I send him the prefixed bagatelle, pleased with the thought that it will greet the man

of my bosom, and be a kind of distant language of friendship.

You will have heard that poor Armour has repaid me double. A very fine boy and a girl have awakened a thought and feelings that thrill, some with tender pressure, and some with foreboding anguish, through my soul.

The poem was nearly an extemporaneous production, on a wager with Mr. Hamilton that I would not produce a poem on the subject in a given time.

If you think it worth while, read it to Charles [Samson], and Mr. W. Parker; and if they choose a copy of it, it is at their service, as they are men whose friendship I shall be proud to claim, both in this world and that which is to come.

I believe all hopes of staying at home will be abortive, but more of this when, in the latter part of next week, you shall be troubled with a visit from—my dear Sir, your most devoted,

R. B.

XXIV.

TO MR. JAMES BURNES,
WRITER, MONTROSE.

MOSSGIEL, *Sept. 26th*, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

I this moment receive yours—receive it with the honest hospitable warmth of a friend's welcome. Whatever comes from you wakens always up the better blood about my heart, which your kind little recollections of my paternal friends carries as far as it will go. 'Tis there that man is blest! 'Tis there, my friend, man feels a consciousness of something within him above the trodden clod! The grateful reverence to the hoary (earthly) author of his being—the burning glow when he clasps the woman of his soul to his bosom—the tender yearnings of heart for the little

angels to whom he has given existence—these nature has poured in milky streams about the human heart; and the man who never rouses them to action, by the inspiring influences of their proper objects, loses by far the most pleasurable part of his existence.

My departure is uncertain, but I do not think it will be till after harvest I will be on very short allowance of time indeed, if I do not comply with your friendly invitation. When it will be I don't know; but if I can make my wish good, I will endeavour to drop you a line some time before. My best compliments to Miss Burness: I should be equally mortified should I drop in when she is abroad, but of that I suppose there is little chance.

What I have wrote, heaven knows: I have not time to review it, so accept of it in the beaten way of friendship. With the ordinary phrase, and perhaps more than the ordinary sincerity—I am, dear Sir, ever yours,

R. B.

XXV.

TO MR. ROBERT AIKEN.

October, 1786.

SIR,

I was with Wilson, my printer, t'other day, and settled all our by-gone matters between us. After I had paid him all demands, I made him the offer of the second edition, on the hazard of being paid out of the first and readiest, which he declines. By his account, the paper of a thousand copies would cost about twenty-seven pounds, and the printing about fifteen or sixteen: he offers to agree to this for the printing, if I will advance for the paper, but this you know is out of my power; so farewell hopes of a second edition till I grow richer! an epocha which, I think, will arrive at the payment of the British national debt.

There is scarcely anything hurts

me so much in being disappointed of my second edition, as not having it in my power to show my gratitude to Mr. Ballantine, by publishing my poem of "The Brigs of Ayr." I would detest myself as a wretch, if I thought I were capable in a very long life of forgetting the honest, warm, and tender delicacy with which he enters into my interests. I am sometimes pleased with myself in my grateful sensations; but I believe, on the whole, I have very little merit in it, as my gratitude is not a virtue, the consequence of reflection; but sheerly the instinctive emotion of my heart, too inattentive to allow worldly maxims and views to settle into selfish habits.

I have been feeling all the various rotations and movements within, respecting the Excise. There are many things plead strongly against it; the uncertainty of getting soon into business; the consequences of my follies, which may perhaps make it impracticable for me to stay at home; and besides I have for some time been pining under secret wretchedness, from causes which you pretty well know—the pang of disappointment, the sting of pride, with some wandering stabs of remorse, which never fail to settle on my vitals like vultures, when attention is not called away by the calls of society, or the vagaries of the Muse. Even in the hour of social mirth, my gaiety is the madness of an intoxicated criminal under the hands of the executioner. All these reasons urge me to go abroad, and to all these reasons I have only one answer—the feelings of a father. This, in the present mood I am in, overbalances everything that can be laid in the scale against it.

You may perhaps think it an extravagant fancy, but it is a sentiment which strikes home to my very soul: though sceptical in some points of our current belief, yet, I think, I

have every evidence for the reality of a life beyond the stunted bourne of our present existence; if so, then, how should I, in the presence of that tremendous Being, the Author of existence, how should I meet the reproaches of those who stand to me in the dear relation of children, whom I deserted in the smiling innocence of helpless infancy? O Thou great unknown Power!—Thou almighty God! who hast lighted up reason in my breast, and blessed me with immortality!—I have frequently wandered from that order and regularity necessary for the perfection of Thy works, yet Thou hast never left me nor forsaken me!

Since I wrote the foregoing sheet, I have seen something of the storm of mischief thickening over my folly-devoted head. Should you, my friends, my benefactors, be successful in your applications for me, perhaps it may not be in my power in that way to reap the fruit of your friendly efforts. What I have written in the preceding pages, is the settled tenor of my present resolution; but should inimical circumstances forbid me closing with your kind offer, or enjoying it only threaten to entail farther misery—

To tell the truth, I have little reason for complaint; as the world, in general, has been kind to me fully up to my deserts. I was, for some time past, fast getting into the pining distrustful snarl of the misanthrope. I saw myself alone, unfit for the struggle of life, shrinking at every rising cloud in the chance-directed atmosphere of fortune, while, all defenceless, I looked about in vain for a cover. It never occurred to me, at least never with the force it deserved, that this world is a busy scene, and man, a creature destined for a progressive struggle; and that, however I might possess a warm heart and inoffensive manners (which

last, by the by, was rather more than I could well boast), still, more than these passive qualities, there was something to be done. When all my schoolfellows and youthful compeers (those misguided few excepted who joined, to use a Gentoo phrase, the "hallachores" of the human race) were striking off with eager hope and earnest intent, in some one or other of the many paths of busy life, I was "standing idle in the market-place," or only left the chase of the butterfly from flower to flower, to hunt fancy from whim to whim.

You see, Sir, that if to know one's errors were a probability of mending them, I stand a fair chance. but, according to the reverend Westminster divines, though conviction must precede conversion, it is very far from always implying it.—R. B.

XXVI.

TO MRS. STEWART,

OF STAIR.

[September] 1786.

MADAM,

The hurry of my preparations for going abroad has hindered me from performing my promise so soon as I intended. I have here sent you a parcel of songs, &c., which never made their appearance, except to a friend or two at most. Perhaps some of them may be no great entertainment to you, but of that I am far from being an adequate judge. The song to the tune of "Ettrick Banks" [The Bonnie Lass of Ballochmyle] you will easily see the impropriety of exposing much, even in manuscript. I think, myself, it has some merit: both as a tolerable description of one of nature's sweetest scenes, a July evening; and one of the finest pieces of nature's workmanship, the finest indeed we know anything of, an amiable, beautiful young woman;

but I have no common friend to procure me that permission, without which I would not dare to spread the copy.

I am quite aware, Madam, what task the world would assign me in this letter. The obscure bard, when any of the great condescend to take notice of him, should heap the altar with the incense of flattery. Their high ancestry, their own great and god-like qualities and actions, should be recounted with the most exaggerated description. This, Madam, is a task for which I am altogether unfit. Besides a certain disqualifying pride of heart, I know nothing of your connexions in life, and have no access to where your real character is to be found—the company of your compeers: and more, I am afraid that even the most refined adulation is by no means the road to your good opinion.

One feature of your character I shall ever with grateful pleasure remember;—the reception I got when I had the honour of waiting on you at Stair. I am little acquainted with politeness, but I know a good deal of benevolence of temper and goodness of heart. Surely did those in exalted stations know how happy they could make some classes of their inferiors by condescension and affability, they would never stand so high, measuring out with every look the height of their elevation, but condescend as sweetly as did Mrs. Stewart of Stair.—R. B.

XXVII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP,

OF DUNLOP.

1786.

MADAM,

I am truly sorry I was not at home yesterday, when I was so much honoured with your order for my

copies, and incomparably more by the handsome compliments you are pleased to pay my poetic abilities. I am fully persuaded that there is not any class of mankind so feelingly alive to the titillations of applause as the sons of Parnassus: nor is it easy to conceive how the heart of the poor bard dances with rapture, when those, whose character in life gives them a right to be polite judges, honour him with their approbation. Had you been thoroughly acquainted with me, Madam, you could not have touched my darling heart-chord more sweetly than by noticing my attempts to celebrate your illustrious ancestor, the saviour of his country.

"Great patriot hero! ill-requited chief!"

The first book I met with in my early years, which I perused with pleasure, was "The Life of Hannibal;" the next was "The History of Sir William Wallace:" for several of my earlier years I had few other authors; and many a solitary hour have I stole out, after the laborious vocations of the day, to shed a tear over their glorious but unfortunate stories. In those boyish days I remember, in particular, being struck with that part of Wallace's story where these lines occur—

"Synne to the Leglen wood, when it was late,
To make a silent and a safe retreat."

I chose a fine summer Sunday, the only day my line of life allowed, and walked half a dozen of miles to pay my respects to the Leglen wood, with as much devout enthusiasm as ever pilgrim did to Loretto; and, as I explored every den and dell where I could suppose my heroic countryman to have lodged, I recollect (for even then I was a rhymist) that my heart glowed with a wish to be able to make a song on him in some measure equal to his merits.—R. B.

XXVIII.

TO MISS ALEXANDER.

[THE "BONNIE LASS OF BALLOCH-MYLE."]

MOSSGIEL, 18th November, 1786.

MADAM,

Poets are such outré beings, so much the children of wayward fancy and capricious whim, that I believe the world generally allows them a larger latitude in the laws of propriety, than the sober sons of judgment and prudence. I mention this as an apology for the liberties that a nameless stranger has taken with you in the inclosed poem, which he begs leave to present you with. Whether it has poetical merit any way worthy of the theme, I am not the proper judge; but it is the best my abilities can produce; and what to a good heart will, perhaps, be a superior grace, it is equally sincere as fervent.

The scenery was nearly taken from real life, though I dare say, Madam, you do not recollect it, as I believe you scarcely noticed the poetic *revenir* as he wandered by you. I had roved out as chance directed, in the favourite haunts of my Muse, on the banks of the Ayr, to view nature in all the gaiety of the vernal year. The evening sun was flaming over the distant western hills; not a breath stirred the crimson opening blossom, or the verdant spreading leaf. It was a golden moment for a poetic heart. I listened to the feathered warblers, pouring their harmony on every hand, with a congenial kindred regard, and frequently turned out of my path, lest I should disturb their little songs, or frighten them to another station. Surely, said I to myself, he must be a wretch indeed, who, regardless of your harmonious endeavour to please him, can eye your elusive flights to discover your secret recesses, and to

rob you of all the property nature gives you—your dearest comforts, your helpless nestlings. Even the hoary hawthorn twig that shot across the way, what heart at such a time but must have been interested in its welfare, and wished it preserved from the rudely-browsing cattle, or the withering eastern blast? Such was the scene,—and such the hour, when in a corner of my prospect, I spied one of the fairest pieces of nature's workmanship that ever crowned a poetic landscape or met a poet's eye, those visionary bards excepted, who hold commerce with aerial beings! Had Calumny and Villany taken my walk, they had at that moment sworn eternal peace with such an object.

What an hour of inspiration for a poet! It would have raised plain dull historic prose into metaphor and measure.

The inclosed song was the work of my return home; and perhaps it but poorly answers what might have been expected from such a scene.

I am going to print a second edition of my Poems, but cannot insert these verses without your permission.

I have the honour to be, Madam,
Your most obedient and very
humble Servant,
ROBT. BURNS.

XXIX.

TO WILLIAM CHALMERS AND
JOHN MCADAM.

IN THE NAME OF THE NINE. *Amen!*

WE, Robert Burns, by virtue of a warrant from Nature, bearing date the twenty-fifth day of January, Anno Domini one thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine, Poet Laureat, and Bard in Chief, in and over the districts and countries of Kyle, Cunningham, and Carrick, of old extent, To our trusty and well-beloved William Chalmers and John McAdam, student practitioners in the ancient

and mysterious science of confounding right and wrong.

RIGHT TRUSTY:

Be it known unto you that whereas in the course of our care and watchings over the order and police of all and sundry the manufacturers, retainers, and vendors of poesy; bards, poets, poetasters, rhymers, jinglers, songsters, ballad-singers, &c. &c. &c. male and female—We have discovered a certain nefarious, abominable, and wicked song or ballad, a copy whereof We have here inclosed; Our Will therefore is, that Ye pitch upon and appoint the most execrable individual of that most execrable species known by the appellation of *the Deil's Yell*, and nickname of *The Deil's Yell Nowte*: and after having caused him to kindle a fire at the Cross of Ayr, ye shall, at noontide of the day, put into the said wretch's merciless hands the said copy of the said nefarious and wicked song, to be consumed by fire in the presence of all beholders, in abhorrence of, and terror to, all such compositions and composers. And this in nowise leave ye undone, but have it executed in every point as this our mandate bears, before the twenty-fourth current, when in person we hope to applaud your faithfulness and zeal.

Given at Mauchline this twentieth day of November, Anno Domini one thousand seven hundred and eighty-six.

God save the Bard!

XXX.

TO JAMES DALRYMPLE, ESQ.,
OF ORANGEFIELD.

[30th Nov., 1786.]

DEAR SIR,

I suppose the devil is so elated with his success with you, that he is determined by a *coup de main* to

complete his purposes on you all at once, in making you a poet. I broke open the letter you sent me—hummed over the rhymes—and as I saw they were extempore, said to myself they were very well; but when I saw at the bottom a name that I shall ever value with grateful respect, "I gapit wide, but naething spak." I was nearly as much struck as the friends of Job, of affliction-bearing memory, when they sat down with him seven days and seven nights, and spake not a word.

I am naturally of a superstitious cast; and as soon as my wonder-scared imagination regained its consciousness, and resumed its functions, I cast about what this mania of yours might portend. My foreboding ideas had the wide stretch of possibility; and several events, great in their magnitude, and important in their consequences, occurred to my fancy. The downfall of the conclave, or the crushing of the cork rumps—a ducal coronet to Lord George Gordon, and the Protestant interest, or St. Peter's keys to —.

You want to know how I come on. I am just in *statu quo*, or, not to insult a gentleman with my Latin, in "auld use and wont." The noble Earl of Glencairn took me by the hand to-day, and interested himself in my concerns, with a goodness like that benevolent being whose image he so richly bears. He is a stronger proof of the immortality of the soul than any that philosophy ever produced. A mind like his can never die. Let the worshipful Squire H. L., or the Reverend Mass J. M., go into their primitive nothing. At best, they are but ill-digested lumps of chaos—only, one of them strongly tinged with bituminous particles and sulphureous effluvia. But my noble patron, eternal as the heroic swell of magnanimity, and the generous throb of benevolence, shall look on with

princely eye at "the war of elements, the wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds."—R. B.

XXXI.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.,
MAUCHLINE.

EDINBURGH, December 7th, 1786.

HONOURED SIR,

I have paid every attention to your commands, but can only say what perhaps you will have heard before this reach you, that Muirkirklands were bought by a John Gordon, W.S., but for whom I know not; Mauchlands, Haugh Mill, &c., by a Frederick Fotheringham, supposed to be for Ballochmyle Laird, and Adam-hill and Shawwood were bought for Oswald's folks. This is so imperfect an account, and will be so late ere it reach you, that were it not to discharge my conscience I would not trouble you with it; but after all my diligence I could make it no sooner nor better.

For my own affairs, I am in a fair way of becoming as eminent as Thomas à Kempis or John Bunyan; and you may expect henceforth to see my birthday inserted among the wonderful events, in the Poor Robin's and Aberdeen Almanacks, along with the Black Monday, and the battle of Bothwell Bridge. My Lord Glencairn and the Dean of Faculty, Mr. H. Erskine, have taken me under their wing; and by all probability I shall soon be the tenth worthy, and the eighth wise man of the world. Through my Lord's influence it is inserted in the records of the Caledonian Hunt, that they universally, one and all, subscribe for the second edition. My subscription bills come out to-morrow, and you shall have some of them next post. I have met, in Mr. Dalrymple, of Orangefield, what Solomon emphatically calls "a

friend that sticketh closer than a brother." The warmth with which he interests himself in my affairs is of the same enthusiastic kind which you, Mr. Aiken, and the few patrons that took notice of my earlier poetic days showed for the poor unlucky devil of a poet.

I always remember Mrs. Hamilton and Miss Kennedy in my poetic prayers, but you both in prose and verse.

May could ne'er catch you but a hap,
Nor hunger but in plenty's lap!
Amen!

R. B.

XXXII.

TO JOHN BALLANTINE, ESQ.,
BANKER, AYR.

EDINBURGH, 13th December, 1786.

MY HONOURED FRIEND,

I would not write you till I could have it in my power to give you some account of myself and my matters, which by the by is often no easy task. I arrived here on Tuesday was se'nnight, and have suffered ever since I came to town with a miserable head-ache and stomach complaint, but am now a good deal better. I have found a worthy warm friend in Mr. Dalrymple, of Orangefield, who introduced me to Lord Glencairn, a man whose worth and brotherly kindness to me I shall remember when time shall be no more. By his interest it is passed in the "Caledonian Hunt," and entered in their books, and they are to take each a copy of the second edition, for which they are to pay one guinea. I have been introduced to a good many of the *noblesse*, but my avowed patrons and patronesses are, the Duchess of Gordon—the Countess of Glencairn, with my Lord, and Lady Betty—the Dean of Faculty—Sir John Whitefoord. I have likewise warm friends among the literati:

Professors Stewart, Blair, and Mr. Mackenzie—the Man of Feeling. An unknown hand left ten guineas for the Ayrshire Bard with Mr. Sibbald, which I got. I since have discovered my generous unknown friend to be Patrick Miller, Esq., brother to the Justice Clerk; and drank a glass of claret with him by invitation at his own house yesterday. I am nearly agreed with Creech to print my book, and I suppose I will begin on Monday. I will send a subscription bill or two, next post; when I intend writing my first kind patron, Mr. Aiken. I saw his son to-day, and he is very well.

Dugald Stewart, and some of my learned friends, put me in the periodical paper called the *Lounger*, a copy of which I here inclose you. I was, Sir, when I was first honoured with your notice, too obscure; now I tremble lest I should be ruined by being dragged too suddenly into the glare of polite and learned observation.

I shall certainly, my ever-honoured patron, write you an account of my every step; and better health and more spirits may enable me to make it something better than this stupid matter-of-fact epistle.

I have the honour to be,
Good Sir,

Your ever grateful humble Servant,
R. B.

XXXIII.

TO MR. ROBERT MUIR.

EDINBURGH, December 20th, 1786.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have just time for the carrier, to tell you that I received your letter; of which I shall say no more but what a lass of my acquaintance said of her bastard wean; she said she "did na ken wha was the father exactly, but she suspected it was some o' thae bonny blackguard smugglers,

for it was like them." So I only say your obliging epistle was like you. I inclose you a parcel of subscription bills. Your affair of sixty copies is also like you; but it would not be like me to comply.

Your friend's notion of my life has put a crotchet in my head of sketching it in some future epistle to you. My compliments to Charles and Mr. Parker.—R. B.

XXXIV.

TO MR. WILLIAM CHALMERS,

WRITER, AYR.

EDINBURGH, *December 27th, 1786.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I confess I have sinned the sin for which there is hardly any forgiveness—ingratitude to friendship—in not writing you sooner; but of all men living, I had intended to have sent you an entertaining letter; and by all the plodding, stupid powers, that in nodding, conceited majesty, preside over the dull routine of business—a heavily solemn oath this!—I am, and have been, ever since I came to Edinburgh, as unfit to write a letter of humour, as to write a commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine, who was banished to the Isle of Patmos, by the cruel and bloody Domitian, son to Vespasian and brother to Titus, both emperors of Rome, and who was himself an emperor, and raised the second or third persecution, I forget which, against the Christians, and after throwing the said Apostle John, brother to the Apostle James, commonly called James the Greater, to distinguish him from another James, who was, on some account or other, known by the name of James the Less—after throwing him into a caldron of boiling oil, from which he was miraculously preserved, he banished the poor son of Zebedee

to a desert island in the Archipelago, where he was gifted with the second sight, and saw as many wild beasts as I have seen since I came to Edinburgh; which, a circumstance not very uncommon in story-telling, brings me back to where I set out.

To make you some amends for what, before you reach this paragraph, you will have suffered, I inclose you two poems I have carded and spun since I passed Glenbuck.

One blank in the Address to Edinburgh—"Fair B——," is heavenly Miss Burnet, daughter to Lord Monboddo, at whose house I have had the honour to be more than once. There has not been anything nearly like her in all the combinations of beauty, grace, and goodness the great Creator has formed, since Milton's Eve on the first day of her existence.

My direction is—care of Andrew Bruce, merchant, Bridge-street.

R. B.

XXXV.

TO THE EARL OF EGLINTON.

EDINBURGH, *11th January, 1787.*

MY LORD,

As I have but slender pretensions to philosophy, I cannot rise to the exalted ideas of a citizen of the world, but have all those national prejudices, which I believe glow peculiarly strong in the breast of a Scotchman. There is scarcely anything to which I am so feelingly alive as the honour and welfare of my country: and as a poet, I have no higher enjoyment than singing her sons and daughters. Fate had cast my station in the veriest shades of life; but never did a heart pant more ardently than mine to be distinguished; though till very lately, I looked in vain on every side for

a ray of light. It is easy then to guess how much I was gratified with the countenance and approbation of one of my country's most illustrious sons, when Mr. Wauchope called on me yesterday on the part of your lordship. Your munificence, my lord, certainly deserves my very grateful acknowledgments; but your patronage is a bounty peculiarly suited to my feelings. I am not master enough of the etiquette of life to know, whether there be not some impropriety in troubling your lordship with my thanks, but my heart whispered me to do it. From the emotions of my inmost soul I do it. Selfish ingratitude I hope I am incapable of; and mercenary servility, I trust, I shall ever have so much honest pride as to detest.—R. B.

XXXVI.

TO JOHN BALLANTINE, ESQ.

EDINBURGH, January 14th, 1787.

MY HONOURED FRIEND,

It gives me a secret comfort to observe in myself that I am not yet so far gone as Willie Gaw's Skate, "past redemption;" for I have still this favourable symptom of grace, that when my conscience, as in the case of this letter, tells me I am leaving something undone that I ought to do, it teazes me eternally till I do it.

I am still "dark as was Chaos" in respect to futurity. My generous friend Mr. Patrick Miller, has been talking with me about the lease of some farm or other in an estate called Dalswinton, which he has lately bought near Dumfries. Some lighted embittering recollections whisper me that I will be happier anywhere than in my old neighbourhood, but Mr. Miller is no judge of land; and though I dare say he

means to favour me, yet he may give me, in his opinion, an advantageous bargain that may ruin me. I am to take a tour by Dumfries as I return, and have promised to meet Mr. Miller on his lands some time in May.

I went to a mason-lodge yesterday, where the most Worshipful Grand Master Chartres, and all the Grand Lodge of Scotland visited. The meeting was numerous and elegant; all the different lodges about town were present, in all their pomp. The Grand Master, who presided with great solemnity and honour to himself, as a gentleman and a mason, among other general toasts, gave "Caledonia, and Caledonia's Bard, Brother Burns," which rung through the whole assembly with multiplied honours and repeated acclamations. As I had no idea such a thing would happen, I was downright thunder-struck, and, trembling in every nerve, made the best return in my power. Just as I had finished, some of the grand officers said, so loud that I could hear, with a most comforting accent, "Very well indeed!" which set me something to rights again.

I have to-day corrected my 152d page. My best good wishes to Mr. Aiken.

I am ever, dear Sir,
Your much obliged humble Servant,
R. B.

XXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

January —, 1787.

WHILE here I sit, sad and solitary, by the side of a fire in a little country inn, and drying my wet clothes, in pops a poor fellow of a sodger, and tells me he is going to Ayr. By heavens! say I to myself, with a tide of good spirits which the magic of that sound, Auld Toon o' Ayr,

conjured up, I will send my last song to Mr. Ballantine. Here it is—

Ye flowery banks o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fair;
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care?

XXXVIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

EDINBURGH, 15th January, 1787.

MADAM,

Yours of the 9th current, which I am this moment honoured with, is a deep reproach to me for ungrateful neglect. I will tell you the real truth, for I am miserably awkward at a fib—I wished to have written to Dr. Moore before I wrote to you; but though every day since I received yours of December 30th, the idea, the wish to write to him has constantly pressed on my thoughts, yet I could not for my soul set about it. I know his fame and character, and I am one of “the sons of little men.” To write him a mere matter-of-fact affair, like a merchant's order, would be disgracing the little character I have; and to write the author of “The View of Society and Manners” a letter of sentiment—I declare every artery runs cold at the thought. I shall try, however, to write to him to-morrow or next day. His kind interposition in my behalf I have already experienced, as a gentleman waited on me the other day, on the part of Lord Eglinton, with ten guineas, by way of subscription for two copies of my next edition.

The word you object to in the mention I have made of my glorious countryman and your immortal ancestor, is indeed borrowed from Thomson; but it does not strike me as an improper epithet. I distrusted my own judgment on your finding fault with it, and applied for the opinion of some of the literati here, who honour me with their critical

strictures, and they all allow it to be proper. The song you ask I cannot recollect, and I have not a copy of it. I have not composed anything on the great Wallace, except what you have seen in print; and the inclosed, which I will print in this edition.* You will see I have mentioned some others of the name. When I composed my “Vision” long ago, I had attempted a description of Kyle, of which the additional stanzas are a part, as it originally stood. My heart glows with a wish to be able to do justice to the merits of the “saviour of his country,” which sooner or later I shall at least attempt.

You are afraid I shall grow intoxicated with my prosperity as a poet: alas! Madam, I know myself and the world too well. I do not mean any airs of affected modesty; I am willing to believe that my abilities deserve some notice; but in a most enlightened, informed age and nation, when poetry is and has been the study of men of the first natural genius, aided with all the powers of polite learning, polite books, and polite company—to be dragged forth to the full glare of learned and polite observation, with all my imperfections of awkward rusticity and crude unpolished ideas on my head—I assure you, Madam, I do not dissemble when I tell you I tremble for the consequences. The novelty of a poet in my obscure situation, without any of those advantages which are reckoned necessary for that character, at least at this time of day, has raised a partial tide of public notice which has borne me to a height, where I am absolutely, feelingly certain my abilities are inadequate to support me; and too surely do I see that time when the same tide will leave

* Stanzas in the “Vision” beginning “By stately tower or palace fair,” and ending with the first Duan.

me, and recede, perhaps, as far below the mark of truth. I do not say this in the ridiculous affectation of self-abasement and modesty. I have studied myself, and know what ground I occupy; and, however a friend or the world may differ from me in that particular, I stand for my own opinion, in silent resolve, with all the tenaciousness of property. I mention this to you once for all to disburthen my mind, and I do not wish to hear or say more about it. But,

"When proud fortune's ebbing tide recedes,"

you will bear me witness, that when my bubble of fame was at the highest, I stood unintoxicated, with the inebriating cup in my hand, looking forward with rueful resolve to the hastening time, when the blow of Calumny should dash it to the ground, with all the eagerness of vengeful triumph.

Your patronizing me and interesting yourself in my fame and character as a poet, I rejoice in; it exalts me in my own idea; and whether you can or cannot aid me in my subscription is a trifle. Has a paltry subscription-bill any charms to the heart of a bard, compared with the patronage of the descendant of the immortal Wallace?—R. B.

XXXIX.

TO DR. JOHN MOORE.

EDINBURGH, *17th January, 1787.*

SIR,

Mrs. Dunlop has been so kind as to send me extracts of letters she has had from you, where you do the rustic bard the honour of noticing him and his works. Those who have felt the anxieties and solitudes of authorship, can only know what pleasure it gives to be noticed in such a manner, by judges of the first character. Your criticisms, Sir, I

receive with reverence; only I am sorry they mostly came too late: a peccant passage or two that I would certainly have altered, were gone to the press.

The hope to be admired for ages is, in by far the greater part of those even who are authors of repute, an unsubstantial dream. For my part, my first ambition was, and still my strongest wish is, to please my compeers, the rustic inmates of the hamlet, while ever changing language and manners shall allow me to be relished and understood. I am very willing to admit that I have some poetical abilities; and as few, if any writers, either moral or poetical, are intimately acquainted with the classes of mankind among whom I have chiefly mingled, I may have seen men and manners in a different phasis from what is common, which may assist originality of thought. Still I know very well the novelty of my character has by far the greatest share in the learned and polite notice I have lately had; and in a language where Pope and Churchill have raised the laugh, and Shenstone and Gray drawn the tear; where Thomson and Beattie have painted the landscape, and Lyttelton and Collins described the heart, I am not vain enough to hope for distinguished poetic fame.

R. B.

XL.

TO THE

REV. GEORGE LAWRIE,
NEWMILNS, NEAR KILMARNOCK.

EDINBURGH, *February 5th, 1787.*

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

When I look at the date of your kind letter, my heart reproaches me severely with ingratitude in neglecting so long to answer it. I will not trouble you with any account by way of apology, of my hurried life and distracted attention: do me the

justice to believe that my delay by no means proceeded from want of respect. I feel, and ever shall feel for you, the mingled sentiments of esteem for a friend and reverence for a father.

I thank you, Sir, with all my soul for your friendly hints, though I do not need them so much as my friends are apt to imagine. You are dazzled with newspaper accounts and distant reports; but in reality, I have no great temptation to be intoxicated with the cup of prosperity. Novelty may attract the attention of mankind awhile; to it I owe my present éclat; but I see the time not far distant when the popular tide which has borne me to a height of which I am, perhaps, unworthy, shall recede with silent celerity, and leave me a barren waste of sand, to descend at my leisure to my former station. I do not say this in the affectation of modesty; I see the consequence is unavoidable, and am prepared for it. I had been at a good deal of pains to form a just, impartial estimate of my intellectual powers before I came here; I have not added, since I came to Edinburgh, anything to the account; and I trust I shall take every atom of it back to my shades, the coverts of my unnoticed early years.

In Dr. Blacklock, whom I see very often, I have found what I would have expected in our friend, a clear head and an excellent heart.

By far the most agreeable hours I spend in Edinburgh must be placed to the account of Miss Lawrie and her pianoforte. I cannot help repeating to you and Mrs. Lawrie a compliment that Mr. Mackenzie, the celebrated "Man of Feeling," paid to Miss Lawrie, the other night, at the concert. I had come in at the interlude, and sat down by him till I saw Miss Lawrie in a seat not very distant, and went up to pay my respects to her. On my return to

Mr. Mackenzie, he asked me who she was; I told him 'twas the daughter of a reverend friend of mine in the west country. He returned, there was something very striking, to his idea, in her appearance. On my desiring to know what it was, he was pleased to say "She has a great deal of the elegance of a well-bred lady about her, with all the sweet simplicity of a country girl."

My compliments to all the happy inmates of St. Margaret's.—R. B.

XLI.

TO DR. JOHN MOORE.

EDINBURGH, *February 15th, 1787.*

SIR,

Pardon my seeming neglect in delaying so long to acknowledge the honour you have done me, in your kind notice of me, January 23rd. Not many months ago I knew no other employment than following the plough, nor could boast anything higher than a distant acquaintance with a country gentleman. Mere greatness never embarrasses me; I have nothing to ask from the great, and I do not fear their judgment; but genius, polished by learning, and at its proper point of elevation in the eye of the world, this of late I frequently meet with, and tremble at its approach. I scorn the affectation of seeming modesty to cover self-conceit. That I have some merit I do not deny; but I see with frequent wringings of heart, that the novelty of my character, and the honest national prejudice of my countrymen, have borne me to a height altogether untenable to my abilities.

For the honour Miss Williams has done me, please, Sir, return her in my name my most grateful thanks. I have more than once thought of paying her in kind, but have hitherto quitted the idea in hopeless

despondency. I had never before heard of her; but the other day I got her Poems, which for several reasons, some belonging to the head, and others the offspring of the heart, give me a great deal of pleasure. I have little pretensions to critic lore; there are, I think two characteristic features in her poetry—the unfettered wild flight of native genius, and the querulous, sombre tenderness of “time-settled sorrow.”

I only know what pleases me, often without being able to tell why.

R. B.

XLII.

TO JOHN BALLANTINE, ESQ.,

AYR.

EDINBURGH, *February 24th, 1787.*

MY HONOURED FRIEND,

I will soon be with you now, in guid black prent;—in a week or ten days at farthest. I am obliged, against my own wish, to print subscribers' names; so if any of my Ayr friends have subscription bills, they must be sent into Creech directly. I am getting my phiz done by an eminent engraver, and if it can be ready in time, I will appear in my book, looking like all other *fools* to my title-page.—R. B.

XLIII.

TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

[*Feb. 1787.*]

MY LORD,

The honour your lordship has done me, by your notice and advice in yours of the 1st instant, I shall ever gratefully remember:—

“Praise from thy lips 'tis mine with joy to boast,
They best can give it who deserve it most.”

Your lordship touches the darling chord of my heart, when you advise me to fire my muse at Scottish story

and Scottish scenes. I wish for nothing more than to make a leisurely pilgrimage through my native country; to sit and muse on those once hard-contended fields, where Caledonia, rejoicing, saw her bloody lion borne through broken ranks to victory and fame; and, catching the inspiration, to pour the deathless names in song. But, my lord, in the midst of these enthusiastic reveries, a long-visaged, dry, moral-looking phantom strides across my imagination, and pronounces these emphatic words:—

“I, Wisdom, dwell with Prudence. Friend, I do not come to open the ill-closed wounds of your follies and misfortunes, merely to give you pain: I wish through these wounds to imprint a lasting lesson on your heart. I will not mention how many of my salutary advices you have despised: I have given you line upon line and precept upon precept; and while I was chalking out to you the straight way to wealth and character, with audacious effrontery you have zigzagged across the path, contemning me to my face: you know the consequences. It is not yet three months since I was so hot for you that you were on the wing for the western shore of the Atlantic, not to make a fortune, but to hide your misfortune.

“Now that your dear-loved Scotia puts it in your power to return to the situation of your forefathers, will you follow these will-o'-wisp meteors of fancy and whim till they bring you once more to the brink of ruin? I grant that the utmost ground you can occupy is but half a step from the veriest poverty; but still it is half a step from it. If all that I can urge be ineffectual, let her who seldom calls to you in vain, let the call of Pride prevail with you. You know how you feel at the iron gripe of ruthless oppression: you know how you bear the galling sneer of

contumelious greatness. I hold you out the conveniences, the comforts of life, independence, and character, on the one hand; I tender you civility, dependence, and wretchedness, on the other. I will not insult your understanding by bidding you make a choice."

This, my lord, is unanswerable. I must return to my humble station, and woo my rustic muse in my wonted way at the plough-tail. Still, my lord, while the drops of life warm my heart, gratitude to that dear-loved country in which I boast my birth, and gratitude to those her distinguished sons who have honoured me so much with their patronage and approbation, shall, while stealing through my humble shades, ever distend my bosom, and at times, as now, draw forth the swelling tear.

R. B.

XLIV.

TO THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

EDINBURGH 1787.

MY LORD,

I wanted to purchase a profile of your lordship, which I was told was to be got in town; but I am truly sorry to see that a blundering painter has spoiled a "human face divine." The inclosed stanzas I intended to have written below a picture or profile of your lordship, could I have been so happy as to procure one with anything of a likeness.

As I will soon return to my shades, I wanted to have something like a material object for my gratitude: I wanted to have it in my power to say to a friend, there is my noble patron, my generous benefactor. Allow me, my lord, to publish these verses. I conjure your lordship, by the honest throe of gratitude, by the generous wish of benevolence, by all

the powers and feelings which compose the magnanimous mind, do not deny me this petition. I owe much to your lordship; and, what has not in some other instances always been the case with me, the weight of the obligation is a pleasing load. I trust I have a heart as independent as your lordship's, than which I can say nothing more; and I would not be beholden to favours that would crucify my feelings. Your dignified character in life, and manner of supporting that character, are flattering to my pride; and I would be jealous of the purity of my grateful attachment, where I was under the patronage of one of the much favoured sons of fortune.

Almost every poet has celebrated his patrons, particularly when they were names dear to fame, and illustrious in their country; allow me, then, my lord, if you think the verses have intrinsic merit, to tell the world how much I have the honour to be,

Your lordship's highly indebted,
And ever grateful humble Servant,
R. B.

XLV.

TO MR. JAMES CANDLISH,

STUDENT OF PHYSIC, COLLEGE,
GLASGOW.

EDINBURGH, *March 21st, 1787.*

MY EVER DEAR OLD ACQUAINTANCE,

I was equally surprised and pleased at your letter, though I dare say you will think by my delaying so long to write to you that I am so drowned in the intoxication of good fortune as to be indifferent to old, and once dear connexions. The truth is, I was determined to write a good letter, full of argument, amplification, erudition, and, as Bayes says, *all that*. I thought of it, and thought of it, and, by my soul, I could not; and, lest you should mistake the cause of my

silence, I just sit down to tell you so. Don't give yourself credit, though, that the strength of your logic scares me: the truth is, I never mean to meet you on that ground at all. You have shown me one thing which was to be demonstrated: that strong pride of reasoning, with a little affectation of singularity, may mislead the best of hearts. I likewise, since you and I were first acquainted, in the pride of despising old women's stories, ventured in "the daring path Spinosà trod;" but experience of the weakness, not the strength of human powers, made me glad to grasp at revealed religion.

I am still, in the Apostle Paul's phrase, "The old man with his deeds," as when we were sporting about the "Lady Thorn." I shall be four weeks here yet at least; and so I shall expect to hear from you; welcome sense, welcome nonsense.

I am, with the warmest sincerity,

R. B.

XLVI.

TO MR. PETER STUART,

EDITOR OF THE "STAR" NEWSPAPER,
LONDON.

EDINBURGH, *March, 1787.*

MY DEAR SIR,

You may think, and too justly, that I am a selfish, ungrateful fellow, having received so many repeated instances of kindness from you, and yet never putting pen to paper to say thank you: but if you knew what a devil of a life my conscience has led me on that account, your good heart would think yourself too much avenged. By the by there is nothing in the whole frame of man which seems to be so unaccountable as that thing called conscience. Had the troublesome yelping cur powers efficient to prevent a mischief, he might be of use; but at the beginning

of the business, his feeble efforts are to the workings of passion, as the infant frosts of an autumnal morning to the unclouded fervour of the rising sun: and no sooner are the tumultuous doings of the wicked deed over, than, amidst the bitter native consequences of folly, in the very vortex of our horrors, up starts conscience, and harrows us with the feelings of the damned.

The inscription on the stone will be as follows:—

"HERE LIES ROBERT FERGUSSON, POET,
"Born September 5th, 1751—Died, 16th
September, 1774.

"No sculptur'd marble here, nor pompous lay,
'No stor'd urn adorns a mated bust;
This simple stone directs, pale Scotia's way,
To pour her sorrows o'er her poet's dust."

On the other side of the stone will be inscribed:—

"By special grant of the Managers to Robert Burns, who erected this stone, this burial place is to remain for ever sacred to the memory of Robert Fergusson."—R. B.

XLVII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

EDINBURGH, *March 22nd, 1787.*

MADAM,

I read your letter with watery eyes. A little, very little while ago, I had scarce a friend but the stubborn pride of my own bosom; now I am distinguished, patronized, befriended by you. Your friendly advices—I will not give them the cold name of criticisms—I receive with reverence. I have made some small alterations in what I before had printed. I have the advice of some very judicious friends among the literati here, but with them I sometimes find it necessary to claim the privilege of thinking for myself. The noble Earl of Glencairn, to whom I owe more than to any man, does me the honour of giving me his strictures:

his hints, with respect to impropriety or indelicacy, I follow implicitly.

You kindly interest yourself in my future views and prospects; there I can give you no light. It is all

"Dark as was Chaos ere the infant sun
Was roll'd together, or had tried his beams
Athwart the gloom profound."

The appellation of a Scottish bard, is by far my highest pride; to continue to deserve it is my most exalted ambition. Scottish scenes and Scottish story are the themes I could wish to sing. I have no dearer aim than to have it in my power, unplagued with the routine of business, for which heaven knows I am unfit enough, to make leisurely pilgrimages through Caledonia; to sit on the fields of her battles; to wander on the romantic banks of her rivers; and to muse by the stately towers or venerable ruins, once the honoured abodes of her heroes.

But these are all Utopian thoughts: I have dallied long enough with life; 'tis time to be in earnest. I have a fond, an aged mother to care for: and some other bosom ties perhaps equally tender. Where the individual only suffers by the consequences of his own thoughtlessness, indolence, or folly, he may be excusable; nay, shining abilities, and some of the nobler virtues, may half sanctify a heedless character; but where God and nature have entrusted the welfare of others to his care; where the trust is sacred, and the ties are dear, that man must be far gone in selfishness, or strangely lost to reflection, whom these connexions will not rouse to exertion.

I guess that I shall clear between two and three hundred pounds by my authorship; with that sum I intend, so far as I may be said to have any intention, to return to my old acquaintance, the plough, and, if I can meet with a lease by which I can live, to commence farmer. I do not intend to give up poetry; being

bred to labour, secures me independence, and the muses are my chief, sometimes have been my only enjoyment. If my practice second my resolution, I shall have principally at heart the serious business of life; but while following my plough, or building up my shocks, I shall cast a leisure glance to that dear, that only feature of my character, which gave me the notice of my country, and the patronage of a Wallace.

Thus, honoured Madam, I have given you the bard, his situation, and his views, native as they are in his own bosom.—R. B.

XLVIII.

TO THE SAME.

EDINBURGH, 15th April, 1787.

MADAM,

There is an affectation of gratitude which I dislike. The periods of Johnson and the pauses of Sterne may hide a selfish heart. For my part, Madam, I trust I have too much pride for servility, and too little prudence for selfishness. I have this moment broken open your letter, but

"Rude am I in speech,
And therefore little can I grace my cause
In speaking for myself—"

so I shall not trouble you with any fine speeches and hunted figures. I shall just lay my hand on my heart and say, I hope I shall ever have the truest, the warmest, sense of your goodness.

I come abroad, in print, for certain on Wednesday. Your orders I shall punctually attend to; only by the way, I must tell you that I was paid before for Dr. Moore's and Miss Williams' copies, through the medium of Commissioner Cochrane in this place, but that we can settle when I have the honour of waiting on you.

Dr. Smith was just gone to London the morning before I received your letter to him.—R. B.

XLIX.

TO DR. JOHN MOORE,
LONDON.

EDINBURGH, *23d April, 1787.*

I RECEIVED the books, and sent the one you mentioned to Mrs. Dunlop. I am ill skilled in beating the coverts of imagination for metaphors of gratitude. I thank you, Sir, for the honour you have done me; and to my latest hour will warmly remember it. To be highly pleased with your book is what I have in common with the world; but to regard these volumes as a mark of the author's friendly esteem is a still more supreme gratification.

I leave Edinburgh in the course of ten days or a fortnight, and, after a few pilgrimages over some of the classic ground of Caledonia, Cowden Knowes, Banks of Yarrow, Tweed, &c., I shall return to my rural shades, in all likelihood never more to quit them. I have formed many intimacies and friendships here, but I am afraid they are all of too tender a construction to bear carriage a hundred and fifty miles. To the rich, the great, the fashionable, the polite, I have no equivalent to offer; and I am afraid my meteor appearance will by no means entitle me to a settled correspondence with any of you, who are the permanent lights of genius and literature.

My most respectful compliments to Miss Williams. If once this tangent flight of mine were over, and I were returned to my wonted leisurely motion in my old circle, I may probably endeavour to return her poetic compliment in kind.—R. B.

L.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

EDINBURGH, *30th April, 1787.*

—YOUR criticisms, Madam, I understand very well, and could have wished to have pleased you

better. You are right in your guess that I am not very amenable to counsel. Poets, much my superiors, have so flattered those who possessed the adventitious qualities of wealth and power, that I am determined to flatter no created being, either in prose or verse.

I set as little by princes, lords, clergy, critics, &c., as all these respective gentry do by my bardship. I know what I may expect from the world, by and by—illiberal abuse, and, perhaps contemptuous neglect.

I am happy, Madam, that some of my own favourite pieces are distinguished by your particular approbation. For my "Dream," which has unfortunately incurred your loyal displeasure, I hope in four weeks, or less, to have the honour of appearing, at Dunlop, in its defence in person.—R. B.

LI.

TO THE
REV. DR. HUGH BLAIR.

LAWNMARKET,
EDINBURGH, *3rd May, 1787.*

REVEREND AND
MUCH RESPECTED SIR,

I leave Edinburgh to-morrow morning, but could not go without troubling you with half a line, sincerely to thank you for the kindness, patronage, and friendship you have shown me. I often felt the embarrassment of my singular situation; drawn forth from the veriest shades of life to the glare of remark; and honoured by the notice of those illustrious names of my country whose works, while they are applauded to the end of time, will ever instruct and mend the heart. However the meteor-like novelty of my appearance in the world might attract notice, and honour me with the acquaintance of the permanent lights of genius and literature, those

who are truly benefactors of the immortal nature of man, I knew very well that my utmost merit was far unequal to the task of preserving that character when once the novelty was over; I have made up my mind that abuse, or almost even neglect, will not surprise me in my quarters.

I have sent you a proof impression of Beugo's work for me, done on Indian paper, as a trifling but sincere testimony with what heart-warm gratitude I am, &c.—R. B.

LII.

TO MR. WILLIAM NICOL,
CLASSICAL MASTER
OF THE HIGH SCHOOL, EDINBURGH.

CARLISLE, *June 1st, 1787.*

KIND, HONEST-HEARTED WILLIE,

I'm sitten down here, after seven and forty miles ridin', e'en as forjesket and forniaw'd as a for-foughten cock, to gie you some notion o' my land-lowerlike stragaguin sin the sorrowfu' hour that I sheuk hands and parted with auld Reekie.

My auld, ga'd gleyde o' a meere has huchy'all'd up hill and down brae, in Scotland and England, as teugh and birnie as a vera devil wi' me. It's true, she's as poor's a sang-maker and as hard's a kirk, and tipper-taipers when she takes the gate, first like a lady's gentlewoman in a minuwae, or a lien on a hot girdle; but she's a yauld, poutherie Ginnan for a' that, and has a stomach like Willie Stalker's meere that wad hae digeested tumbler-wheels, for she'll whip me aff her five stimparts o' the best aits at a down-sittin and ne'er fash her thumb. When ance her ringbanes and spavies, her crucks and cramps, are fairly soupl'd, she beets to, and ay the hindmost hour the tightest. I could wager her price to a thretty pennies, that for twa or

three wooks ridin at fifty mile a day, the deil-sticket a five gallopers acquesh Clyde and Whithorn could cast saut on her tail.

I hae dander'd owre a' the kintra frae Dumbar to Selraig, and hae forgather'd wi' mony a guid fallow, and monie a weellau'd hizzie. I met wi' twa dink quines in particular, ane o' them a sonsie, fine, fodgef lass, baith braw and bonnie: the tither was a clean-shankit, straught, tight, weel-far'd winch, as blythe's a lint-white on a flowerie thorn, and as sweet and modest's a new blawn plumrose in a hazle shaw. They were baith bred to mainers by the beuk, and onie ane o' them had as muckle smeddum and rumblgumtion as the half o' some presbytaries that you and I baith ken. They play'd me sik a deevil o' a shavie that I daur say if my harigals were turn'd out, ye wad see twa nicks i' the heart o' me like the mauk o' a kail-whittle in a castock.

I was gaun to write you a lang pystle, but, Gude forgie me, I gat myself sae noutouriously bitchify'd the day after kail-time, that I can hardly stoiter but and ben.

My best respects to the guidwife and a' our common friens, especiall Mr. and Mrs. Cruikshank, and the honest guidman o' Jock's Lodge.

I'll be in Dumfries the morn gif the beast be to the fore, and the branks bid' hale.

Gude be wi' you, Willie! Amen!

R. B.

LIII.

TO MR. JAMES SMITH,
LINLITHGOW.

MAUCHLINE, *June 11th, 1787.*

MY EVER DEAR SIR,

I date this from Mauchline, where I arrived on Friday even last. If anything had been wanting to disgust me completely at Armour's

family, their mean, servile compliance would have done it.

Give me a spirit like my favourite hero, Milton's Satan :—

"Hail, horrors! hail,
Infernal world! and thou profoundest Hell,
Receive thy new possessor! he who brings
A mind not to be changed by *place or time!*"

I cannot settle to my mind. Farming, the only thing of which I know anything, and heaven above knows but little do I understand of that, I cannot, dare not risk on farms as they are. If I do not fix, I will go for Jamaica. Should I stay in an unsettled state at home, I would only dissipate my little fortune, and ruin what I intend shall compensate my little ones for the stigma I have brought on their names.

I shall write you more at length soon: as this letter costs you no postage, if it be worth reading you cannot complain of your penny-worth.

R. B.

LIV.

TO WILLIAM NICOL, ESQ.,

EDINBURGH.

MAUCHLINE, *June 18th, 1787.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am now arrived safe in my native country, after a very agreeable jaunt, and have the pleasure to find all my friends well. I breakfasted with your grey-headed, reverend friend, Mr. Smith; and was highly pleased both with the cordial welcome he gave me, and his most excellent appearance and sterling good sense.

I have been with Mr. Miller at Dalswinton, and am to meet him again in August. From my view of the lands, and his reception of my bardship, my hopes in that business are rather mended; but still they are but slender.

I am quite charmed with Dumfries folks—Mr. Burnside, the clergyman, in particular, is a man whom I shall

ever gratefully remember; and his wife, Gudc forgie me! I had almost broke the tenth commandment on her account. Simplicity, elegance, good sense, sweetness of disposition, good humour, kind hospitality, are the constituents of her manner and heart: in short—but if I say one word more about her, I shall be directly in love with her.

I never, my friend, thought mankind very capable of anything generous; but the stateliness of the patricians in Edinburgh, and the servility of my plebeian brethren (who perhaps formerly eyed me askance) since I returned home, have nearly put me out of conceit altogether with my species. I have bought a pocket Milton, which I carry perpetually about with me, in order to study the sentiments—the dauntless magnanimity, the intrepid, unyielding independence, the desperate daring, and noble defiance of hardship, in that great personage, SATAN. 'Tis true, I have just now a little cash; but I am afraid the star that hitherto has shed its malignant, purposive-blasting rays full in my zenith, that noxious planet so baneful in its influences to the rhyming tribe, I much dread it is not yet beneath my horizon. Misfortune dodges the path of human life; the poetic mind finds itself miserably deranged in, and unfit for the walks of business; add to all, that thoughtless follies and hare-brained whims, like so many *ignes fatui*, eternally diverging from the right line of sober discretion, sparkle with step-bewitching blaze in the idly-gazing eyes of the poor heedless Bard, till, pop, "he falls like Lucifer, never to hope again." God grant this may be an unreal picture with respect to me! but should it not, I have very little dependence on mankind. I will close my letter with this tribute my heart bids me pay you—the many ties of acquaintance and friendship which I have, or think I

have in life, I have felt along the lines, and, damn them, they are almost all of them of such frail contexture, that I am sure they would not stand the breath of the least adverse breeze of fortune; but from you, my ever dear Sir, I look with confidence for the Apostolic love that shall wait on me "through good report and bad report"—the love which Solomon emphatically says "is strong as death." My compliments to Mrs. Nicol, and all the circle of our common friends.

P.S. I shall be in Edinburgh about the latter end of July.—R. B.

LV.

TO ROBERT AINSLIE, ESQ.,

EDINBURGH.

ARRACHAR, *June 28th, 1787.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I write this on my tour through a country where savage streams tumble over savage mountains, thinly overspread with savage flocks, which sparingly support as savage inhabitants. My last stage was Inverary—to-morrow night's stage Dumbarton. I ought sooner to have answered your kind letter, but you know I am a man of many sins.

R. B.

LVI.

TO MR. JAMES SMITH,

LINLITHGOW.

June 30th, 1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

On our return, at a Highland gentleman's hospitable mansion, we fell in with a merry party, and danced till the ladies left us, at three in the morning. Our dancing was none of the French or English insipid formal movements; the ladies sung Scotch

songs like angels, at intervals; then we flew at "Bab at the Bowster," "Tullochgorum," "Loch Erroch Side," &c., like midges sporting in the mottie sun, or craws prognosticating a storm in a hairst day. When the dear lasses left us, we ranged round the bowl till the good-fellow hour of six; except a few minutes that we went out to pay our devotions to the glorious lump of day peering over the towering top of Benlomond. We all kneeled; our worthy landlord's son held the bowl; each man a full glass in his hand; and I, as priest, repeated some rhyming nonsense, like Thomas-a-Rhymer's prophecies, I suppose. After a small refreshment of the gifts of Somnus, we proceeded to spend the day on Lochlomond, and reached Dumbarton in the evening. We dined at another good fellow's house, and consequently, pushed the bottle; when we went out to mount our horses, we found ourselves "No vera fou but gaylie yet." My two friends and I rode soberly down the Loch side, till by came a Highlandman, at the gallop, on a tolerably good horse, but which had never known the ornaments of iron or leather. We scorned to be out-galoped by a Highlandman, so off we started, whip and spur. My companions, though seemingly gaily mounted, fell sadly astern; but my old mare, Jenny Geddes, one of the Rosinante family, strained past the Highlandman in spite of all his efforts with the hair halter: just as I was passing him, Donald wheeled his horse, as if to cross before me to mar my progress, when down came his horse, and threw his rider's breechless a—e in a clipt hedge; and down came Jenny Geddes over all, and my bardship between her and the Highlandman's horse. Jenny Geddes trode over me with such cautious reverence, that matters were not so bad as might well have been expected; so I came off with a few cuts and bruises, and

a thorough resolution to be a pattern of sobriety for the future.

I have yet fixed on nothing with respect to the serious business of life. I am, just as usual, a rhyming, mason-making, raking, aimless, idle fellow. However, I shall somewhere have a farm soon. I was going to say, a wife too; but that must never be my blessed lot. I am but a younger son of the house of Parnassus, and, like other younger sons of great families, I may intrigue, if I choose to run all risks, but must not marry.

I am afraid I have almost ruined one source, the principal one indeed, of my former happiness; that eternal propensity I always had to fall in love. My heart no more glows with feverish rapture. I have no paradisiacal evening interviews, stolen from the restless cares and prying inhabitants of this wretched world. I have only ***. This last is one of your distant acquaintances, has a fine figure, and elegant manners; and in the train of some great folks whom you know, has seen the politest quarters of Europe. I do like her a good deal; but what piques me is her conduct at the commencement of our acquaintance. I frequently visited her when I was in —, and after passing regularly the intermediate degrees between the distant formal bow and the familiar grasp round the waist, I ventured, in my careless way, to talk of friendship in rather ambiguous terms; and after her return to —, I wrote to her in the same style. Miss, construing my words farther I suppose than even I intended, flew off in a tangent of female dignity and reserve, like a mounting lark in an April morning; and wrote me an answer which measured me out very completely what an immense way I had to travel before I could reach the climate of her favour. But I am an old hawk at the sport, and wrote her such a cool, deliberate, prudent

reply, as brought my bird from her aerial towerings, pop, down at my foot, like Corporal Trim's hat.

As for the rest of my acts, and my wars, and all my wise sayings, and whymymare was called Jenny Geddes, they shall be recorded in a few weeks hence at Linlithgow, in the chronicles of your memory, by R. B.

LVII.

TO MR. JOHN RICHMOND,
EDINBURGH.

MOSSGIEL, *July 7th, 1787.*

MY DEAR RICHMOND,

I am all impatience to hear of your fate since the old confounder of right and wrong has turned you out of place, by his journey to answer his indictment at the bar of the other world. He will find the practice of the court so different from the practice in which he has for so many years been thoroughly hackneyed, that his friends, if he had any connexions truly of that kind, which I rather doubt, may well tremble for his sake. His chicane, his left-handed wisdom, which stood so firmly by him, to such good purpose, here, like other accomplices in robbery and plunder, will, now the piratical business is blown, in all probability turn king's evidence, and then the devil's bagpiper will touch him off "Bundle and go!"

If he has left you any legacy, I beg your pardon for all this; if not, I know you will swear to every word I said about him.

I have lately been rambling over by Dumbarton and Inverary, and running a drunken race on the side of Loch Lomond with a wild Highlandman; his horse, which had never known the ornaments of iron or leather, zigzagged across before my old spavin'd hunter, whose name is Jenny Geddes, and down came the

Highlandman, horse and all, and down came Jenny and my bardship; so I have got such a skinful of bruises and wounds, that I shall be at least four weeks before I dare venture on my journey to Edinburgh.

Not one new thing under the sun has happened in Mauchline since you left it. I hope this will find you as comfortably situated as formerly, or, if heaven pleases, more so; but, at all events, I trust you will let me know of course how matters stand with you, well or ill. 'Tis but poor consolation to tell the world when matters go wrong; but you know very well your connexion and mine stands on a different footing.

I am ever, my dear Friend, yours,
R. B.

LVIII.

TO DR. MOORE.

MAUCHLINE, *August 2d, 1787.*

SIR,

For some months past I have been rambling over the country, but I am now confined with some lingering complaints, originating, as I take it, in the stomach. To divert my spirits a little in this miserable fog of ennui, I have taken a whim to give you a history of myself. My name has made some little noise in this country; you have done me the honour to interest yourself very warmly in my behalf; and I think a faithful account of what character of a man I am, and how I came by that character, may perhaps amuse you in an idle moment. I will give you an honest narrative, though I know it will be often at my own expense; for I assure you, Sir, I have, like Solomon, whose character, excepting in the trifling affair of wisdom, I sometimes think I resemble—I have, I say, like him turned my eyes to behold madness and folly, and like him, too,

frequently shaken hands with their intoxicating friendship. After you have perused these pages, should you think them trifling and impertinent, I only beg leave to tell you, that the poor author wrote them under some twitching qualms of conscience, arising from a suspicion that he was doing what he ought not to do; a predicament he has more than once been in before.

I have not the most distant pretensions to assume that character which the pye-coated guardians of escutcheons call a gentleman. When at Edinburgh last winter, I got acquainted in the Herald's office; and, looking through that granary of honours, I there found almost every name in the kingdom; but for me,

"My ancient but ignoble blood
Has crept thro' scoundrels ever since the flood."

Gules, purple, argent, &c., quite disowned me.

My father was of the north of Scotland, the son of a farmer, and was thrown by early misfortunes on the world at large; where, after many years' wanderings and sojournings, he picked up a pretty large quantity of observation and experience, to which I am indebted for most of my little pretensions to wisdom. I have met with few who understood men, their manners and their ways, equal to him; but stubborn, ungainly integrity, and headlong, ungovernable irascibility, are disqualifying circumstances; consequently, I was born a very poor man's son. For the first six or seven years of my life, my father was gardener to a worthy gentleman of small estate in the neighbourhood of Ayr. Had he continued in that station, I must have marched off to be one of the little underlings about a farmhouse; but it was his dearest wish and prayer to have it in his power to keep his children under his own eye, till they could discern

between good and evil; so with the assistance of his generous master, my father ventured on a small farm on his estate. At those years, I was by no means a favourite with anybody. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot piety. I say idiot piety, because I was then but a child. Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and by the time I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles. In my infant and boyish days, too, I owe much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantraips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry; but had so strong an effect on my imagination, that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look-out in suspicious places; and though nobody can be more sceptical than I am in such matters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle terrors. The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in, was "The Vision of Mirza," and a hymn of Addison's beginning, "How are thy servants blest, O Lord!" I particularly remember one half-stanza which was music to my boyish ear—

"For though in dreadful whirls we hung
High on the broken wave—"

I met with these pieces in Mason's English Collection, one of my school-books. The first two books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I

ever read since, were "The Life of Hannibal," and "The History of Sir William Wallace." Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn, that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bag-pipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest.

Polemical divinity about this time was putting the country half mad, and I, ambitious of shining in conversation parties on Sundays, between sermons, at funerals, &c., used a few years afterwards to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion, that I raised a hue and cry of heresy against me, which has not ceased to this hour.

My vicinity to Ayr was of some advantage to me. My social disposition, when not checked by some modifications of spited pride, was like our catechism definition of infinitude, without bounds or limits. I formed several connexions with other youngsters, who possessed superior advantages; the youngling actors who were busy in the rehearsal of parts, in which they were shortly to appear on the stage of life, where, alas! I was destined to drudge behind the scenes. It is not commonly at this green age, that our young gentry have a just sense of the immense distance between them and their ragged play-fellows. It takes a few dashes into the world, to give the young great man that proper, decent, unnoticing disregard for the poor, insignificant, stupid devils, the mechanics and peasantry around him, who were, perhaps, born in the same village. My young superiors never insulted the clouterly appearance of my plough-boy carcase, the two extremes of which were often exposed to all the inclemencies of all the seasons. They would give me

stray volumes of books; among them, even then, I could pick up some observations, and one, whose heart, I am sure, not even the "Munny Begum" scenes have tainted, helped me to a little French. Parting with these my young friends and benefactors, as they occasionally went off for the East or West Indies, was often to me a sore affliction; but I was soon called to more serious evils. My father's generous master died; the farm proved a ruinous bargain, and to clench the misfortune, we fell into the hands of a factor, who sat for the picture I have drawn of one in my tale of "Twa Dogs." My father was advanced in life when he married; I was the eldest of seven children, and he, worn out by early hardships, was unfit for labour. My father's spirit was soon irritated, but not easily broken. There was a freedom in his lease in two years more, and to weather these two years, we retrenched our expenses. We lived very poorly: I was a dexterous ploughman for my age; and the next eldest to me was a brother (Gilbert), who could drive the plough very well, and help me to thrash the corn. A novel-writer might, perhaps, have viewed these scenes with some satisfaction, but so did not I; my indignation yet boils at the recollection of the scoundrel factor's insolent threatening letters, which used to set us all in tears.

This kind of life—the cheerless gloom of a hermit, with the unceasing moil of a galley slave, brought me to my sixteenth year; a little before which period I first committed the sin of rhyme. You know our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labours of harvest. In my fifteenth autumn, my partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language, but you know the Scottish

idiom: she was a "bonnie, sweet, sonsie lass." In short, she, altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion, which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and bookworm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our dearest blessing here below! How she caught the contagion I cannot tell; you medical people talk much of infection from breathing the same air, the touch, &c.; but I never expressly said I loved her. Indeed I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind with her, when returning in the evening from our labours; why the tones of her voice made my heart-strings thrill like an *Æolian* harp; and particularly why my pulse beat such a furious ratan, when I looked and fingered over her little hand to pick out the cruel nettles, and thistles. Among her other love-inspiring qualities, she sung sweetly; and it was her favourite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who had Greek and Latin; but my girl sung a song which was said to be composed by a small country laird's son, on one of his father's maids, with whom he was in love; and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he; for, excepting that he could smear sheep, and cast peats, his father living in the moorlands, he had no more scholar-craft than myself.

Thus with me began love and poetry; which at times have been my only, and till within the last twelve months, have been my highest enjoyment. My father struggled on till he reached the freedom in his lease, when he entered on a larger farm, about ten miles farther in the country. The nature of the bargain he made was such as to throw a little ready

money into his hands at the commencement of his lease, otherwise the affair would have been impracticable. For four years we lived comfortably here, but a difference commencing between him and his landlord as to terms, after three years' tossing and whirling in the vortex of litigation, my father was just saved from the horrors of a jail, by a consumption, which, after two years' promises, kindly stepped in, and carried him away, to where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest!

It is during the time that we lived on this farm, that my little story is most eventful. I was, at the beginning of this period, perhaps the most ungainly, awkward boy in the parish—no *solitaire* was less acquainted with the ways of the world. What I knew of ancient story was gathered from Salmon's and Guthrie's Geographical Grammars; and the ideas I had formed of modern manners, of literature, and criticism, I got from the Spectator. These, with Pope's Works, some Plays of Shakespeare, Tull and Dickson on Agriculture, The Pantheon, Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, Stackhouse's History of the Bible, Justice's British Gardener's Directory, Boyle's Lectures, Allan Ramsay's Works, Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, A Select Collection of English Songs, and Hervey's Meditations, had formed the whole of my reading. The collection of songs was my *vade mecum*. I pored over them, driving my cart, or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noting the true, tender, or sublime, from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic-craft, such as it is.

In my seventeenth year, to give my manners a brush, I went to a country

dancing-school. My father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings, and my going was, what to this moment I repent, in opposition to his wishes. My father, as I said before, was subject to strong passions; from that instance of disobedience in me, he took a sort of dislike to me, which, I believe, was one cause of the dissipation which marked my succeeding years. I say dissipation, comparatively with the strictness, and sobriety, and regularity of Presbyterian country life; for though the will-o'-wisp meteors of thoughtless whim were almost the sole lights of my path, yet early ingrained piety and virtue kept me for several years afterwards within the line of innocence. The great misfortune of my life was to want an aim. I had felt early some stirrings of ambition, but they were the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops round the walls of his cave. I saw my father's situation entailed on me perpetual labour. The only two openings by which I could enter the temple of fortune were the gate of niggardly economy, or the path of little chicaning bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture I never could squeeze myself into it: the last I always hated—there was contamination in the very entrance! Thus abandoned of aim or view in life, with a strong appetite for sociability, as well from native hilarity as from a pride of observation and remark; a constitutional melancholy or hypochondriasm that made me fly solitude; add to these incentives to social life, my reputation for bookish knowledge, a certain wild logical talent, and a strength of thought something like the rudiments of a science; and it will not seem strange that I was generally a welcome guest where I visited, or any great wonder that always, where two or three met together, there was I among them.

But far beyond all other impulses of my heart, was *un penchant à l'adorable moitié du genre humain*. My heart was completely tinder, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other; and, as in every other warfare in this world, my fortune was various; sometimes I was received with favour, and sometimes I was mortified with a repulse. At the plough, scythe, or reap-hook, I feared no competitor, and thus I set absolute want at defiance; and as I never cared farther for my labours than while I was in actual exercise, I spent the evenings in the way after my own heart. A country lad seldom carries on a love adventure without an assisting confidant. I possessed a curiosity, zeal, and intrepid dexterity that recommended me as a proper second on these occasions; and I dare say, I felt as much pleasure in being in the secret of half the loves of the parish of Tarbolton, as ever did statesman in knowing the intrigues of half the courts of Europe. The very goose-feather in my hand seems to know instinctively the well-worn path of my imagination, the favourite theme of my song; and is with difficulty restrained from giving you a couple of paragraphs on the love-adventures of my compeers, the humble inmates of the farm-house and cottage; but the grave sons of science, ambition, or avarice baptize these things by the name of follies. To the sons and daughters of labour and poverty they are matters of the most serious nature: to them the ardent hope, the stolen interview, the tender farewell, are the greatest and most delicious parts of their enjoyment.

Another circumstance in my life which made some alteration in my mind and manners, was, that I spent my nineteenth summer on a smuggling coast, a good distance from home, at a noted school, to learn

mensuration, surveying, dialling, &c., in which I made a pretty good progress. But I made a greater progress in the knowledge of mankind. The contraband trade was at that time very successful, and it sometimes happened to me to fall in with those who carried it on. Scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation were, till this time, new to me; but I was no enemy to social life. Here, though I learnt to fill my glass, and to mix without fear in a drunken squabble, yet I went on with a high hand with my geometry, till the sun entered Virgo, a month which is always a carnival in my bosom, when a charming fillette, who lived next door to the school, overset my trigonometry, and set me off at a tangent from the spheres of my studies. I, however, struggled on with my sines and co-sines for a few days more; but stepping into the garden one charming noon to take the sun's altitude, there I met my angel—

“Like Proserpine gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower—.”

It was in vain to think of doing any more good at school. The remaining week I staid I did nothing but craze the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet her; and the two last nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, the image of this modest and innocent girl had kept me guiltless.

I returned home very considerably improved. My reading was enlarged with the very important addition of Thomson's and Shenstone's Works: I had seen human nature in a new phasis; and I engaged several of my schoolfellows to keep up a literary correspondence with me. This improved me in composition. I had met with a collection of letters by the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and I pored over them most

devoutly. I kept copies of any of my own letters that pleased me, and a comparison between them and the composition of most of my correspondents flattered my vanity. I carried this whim so far, that though I had not three-farthings' worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of the day-book and ledger.

My life flowed on much in the same course till my twenty-third year. *Vive l'amour, et vive la bagatelle*, were my sole principles of action. The addition of two more authors to my library gave me great pleasure; Sterne and Mackenzie—"Tristram Shandy" and the "Man of Feeling"—were my bosom favourites. Poesy was still a darling walk for my mind, but it was only indulged in according to the humour of the hour. I had usually half a dozen or more pieces on hand; I took up one or other, as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, when once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they got vent in rhyme; and then the conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet! None of the rhymes of those days are in print, except, "Winter, a dirge," the eldest of my printed pieces; "The Death of poor Maillie," "John Barleycorn," and Songs first, second, and third. Song second was the ebullition of that passion which ended the forementioned school-business.

My twenty-third year was to me an important era. Partly through whim, and partly that I wished to set about doing something in life, I joined a flax-dresser in a neighbouring town (Irvine), to learn his trade. This was an unlucky affair. My partner was a scoundrel of the first water, who made money by the mystery of Thieving,

and to finish the whole, as we were giving a welcome carousal to the new year, the shop took fire and burned to ashes, and I was left, like a true poet, not worth a sixpence.

I was obliged to give up this scheme; the clouds of misfortune were gathering thick round my father's head; and, what was worst of all, he was visibly far gone in a consumption; and to crown my distresses, a *belle fille*, whom I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the field of matrimony, jilted me, with peculiar circumstances of mortification. The finishing evil that brought up the rear of this infernal file, was my constitutional melancholy being increased to such a degree, that for three months I was in a state of mind scarcely to be envied by the hopeless wretches who have got their mittimus—depart from me, ye cursed!

From this adventure I learned something of a town life; but the principal thing which gave my mind a turn, was a friendship I formed with a young fellow, a very noble character, but a hapless son of misfortune. He was the son of a simple mechanic; but a great man in the neighbourhood taking him under his patronage, gave him a genteel education, with a view of bettering his situation in life. The patron dying just as he was ready to launch out into the world, the poor fellow in despair went to sea; where, after a variety of good and ill-fortune, a little before I was acquainted with him he had been set on shore by an American privateer, on the wild coast of Connaught, stripped of every thing. I cannot quit this poor fellow's story without adding, that he is at this time master of a large West-Indiaman belonging to the Thames.

His mind was fraught with independence, magnanimity, and every

manly virtue. I loved and admired him to a degree of enthusiasm, and of course strove to imitate him. In some measure I succeeded; I had pride before, but he taught it to flow in proper channels. His knowledge of the world was vastly superior to mine, and I was all attention to learn. He was the only man I ever saw who was a greater fool than myself where woman was the presiding star; but he spoke of illicit love with the levity of a sailor, which hitherto I had regarded with horror. Here his friendship did me a mischief, and the consequence was, that soon after I resumed the plough, I wrote the "Poet's Welcome." My reading only increased while in this town by two stray volumes of Pamela, and one of Ferdinand Count Fathom, which gave me some idea of novels. Rhyme, except some religious pieces that are in print, I had given up; but meeting with Fergusson's Scottish Poems, I strung anew my wildly-sounding lyre with emulating vigour. When my father died, his all went among the hell-hounds that growl in the kennel of justice; but we made a shift to collect a little money in the family amongst us, with which, to keep us together, my brother and I took a neighbouring farm. My brother wanted my hare-brained imagination, as well as my social and amorous madness; but in good sense, and every sober qualification, he was far my superior.

I entered on this farm with a full resolution, "come, go to, I will be wise!" I read farming books, I calculated crops; I attended markets; and in short, in spite of the devil, and the world, and the flesh, I believe I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed, the second from a late harvest, we lost half our crops. This upset all my wisdom, and I returned, "like the dog

to his vomit, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

I now began to be known in the neighbourhood as a maker of rhymes. The first of my poetic offspring that saw the light, was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatis personæ* in my "Holy Fair." I had a notion myself that the piece had some merit; but, to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend, who was very fond of such things, and told him that I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain description of the clergy, as well as laity, it met with a roar of applause. "Holy Willie's Prayer" next made its appearance, and alarmed the kirk-session so much, that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery, if haply any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers. Unluckily for me, my wanderings led me on another side, within point-blank shot of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story that gave rise to my printed poem, "The Lament." This was a most melancholy affair, which I cannot yet bear to reflect on, and had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart, and mistaken the reckoning of rationality. I gave up my part of the farm to my brother; in truth it was only nominally mine; and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica. But before leaving my native country for ever, I resolved to publish my poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as was in my power; I thought they had merit; and it was a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even though it should never reach my ears—a poor negro-driver—or perhaps a victim to that inhospitable clime,

and gone to the world of spirits ! I can truly say, that *pauvre inconnu* as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of myself and of my works as I have at this moment, when the public has decided in their favour. It ever was my opinion that the mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance of themselves. To know myself had been all along my constant study. I weighed myself alone ; I balanced myself with others ; I watched every means of information, to see how much ground I occupied as a man and as a poet ; I studied assiduously Nature's design in my formation—where the lights and shades in my character were intended. I was pretty confident my poems would meet with some applause ; but at the worst, the roar of the Atlantic would deafen the voice of censure, and the novelty of West Indian scenes make me forget neglect. I threw off six hundred copies, of which I had got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty. My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public ; and besides I pocketed, all expenses deducted, nearly twenty pounds. This sum came very seasonably, as I was thinking of indenting myself, for want of money to procure my passage. As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde, for

“Hungry ruin had me in the wind.”

I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail ; as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends ; my chest was on the road to Greenock ; I had composed the

last song I should ever measure in Caledonia—“The gloomy night is gathering fast,” when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine, overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition. The doctor belonged to a set of critics for whose applause I had not dared to hope. His opinion, that I would meet with encouragement in Edinburgh for a second edition, fired me so much, that away I posted for that city, without a single acquaintance, or a single letter of introduction. The baneful star that had so long shed its blasting influence in my zenith, for once made a revolution to the nadir ; and a kind Providence placed me under the patronage of one of the noblest of men, the Earl of Glencairn. *Oublie moi, grand Dieu, si jamais jeoublie !*

I need relate no farther. At Edinburgh I was in a new world. I mingled among many classes of men, but all of them new to me, and I was all attention to “catch” the characters and “the manners living as they rise.”

You can now, Sir, form a pretty near guess of what sort of a Wight he is, whom for some time you have honored with your correspondence. That Whim and Fancy, keen sensibility and riotous passions, may still make him zig-zag in his future path of life, is very probable ; but come what will, I shall answer for him—the most determinate integrity and honor [shall ever characterise him:] and though his evil star should again blaze in his meridian with tenfold more direful influence, he may reluctantly tax friendship with pity, but no more.

My most respectful compliments to Miss Williams. Her very elegant and friendly letter I cannot answer at present, as my presence is requisite in Edinburgh, and I set out to-morrow.—R. B.

LIX.

TO MR. ROBERT MUIR.

STIRLING, 26th August, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

I intended to have written you from Edinburgh, and now write you from Stirling to make an excuse. Here am I, on my way to Inverness, with a truly original, but very worthy man, a Mr. Nicol, one of the masters of the High-school in Edinburgh. I left Auld Reekie yesterday morning, and have passed, besides by-excursions, Linlithgow, Boirrowstouness, Falkirk, and here am I undoubtedly. This morning I knelt at the tomb of Sir John the Graham, the gallant friend of the immortal Wallace; and two hours ago I said a fervent prayer for Old Caledonia over the hole in a blue whinstone, where Robert de Bruce fixed his royal standard on the banks of Bannockburn; and just now, from Stirling Castle, I have seen by the setting sun the glorious prospect of the windings of Forth through the rich carse of Stirling, and skirting the equally rich carse of Falkirk. The crops are very strong, but so very late that there is no harvest, except a ridge or two perhaps in ten miles, all the way I have travelled from Edinburgh.

I left Andrew Bruce and family all well. I will be at least three weeks in making my tour, as I shall return by the coast, and have many people to call for.

My best compliments to Charles, our dear kinsman and fellow-saint; and Messrs. W. and H. Parkers. I hope Hughoc is going on and prospering with God and Miss M'Causlin.

If I could think on anything sprightly, I should let you hear every other post; but a dull, matter-of-fact business like this scrawl, the less and seldomer one writes, the better.

Among other matters-of-fact I shall add this, that I am and ever shall be,

My dear Sir,

Your obliged
R. B.

LX.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.,

MAUCHLINE.

STIRLING, 28th August, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

Here am I on my way to Inverness. I have rambled over the rich, fertile carses of Falkirk and Stirling, and am delighted with their appearance: richly waving crops of wheat, barley, &c. but no harvest at all yet, except, in one or two places, an old wife's ridge. Yesterday morning I rode from this town up the meandering Devon's banks, to pay my respects to some Ayrshire folks at Harvieston. After breakfast, we made a party to go and see the famous Caudron-linn, a remarkable cascade in the Devon, about five miles above Harvieston; and after spending one of the most pleasant days I ever had in my life, I returned to Stirling in the evening. They are a family, Sir: though I had not had any prior tie, though they had not been the brother and sisters of a certain generous friend of mine, I would never forget them. I am told you have not seen them these several years, so you can have very little idea of what these young folks now are. Your brother is as tall as you are, but slender rather than otherwise; and I have the satisfaction to inform you that he is getting the better of those consumptive symptoms which I suppose you know were threatening him. His make, and particularly his manner, resemble you, but he will still have a finer face. (I put in the word *still*, to please Mrs. Hamilton.) Good sense, modesty, and at the same time

a just idea of that respect that man owes to man, and has a right in his turn to exact, are striking features in his character; and, what with me is the Alpha and the Omega, he has a heart that might adorn the breast of a poet! Grace has a good figure, and the look of health and cheerfulness, but nothing else remarkable in her person. I scarcely ever saw so striking a likeness as is between her and your little Beenie; the mouth and chin particularly. She is reserved at first; but as we grew better acquainted, I was delighted with the native frankness of her manner, and the sterling sense of her observation. Of Charlotte I cannot speak in common terms of admiration: she is not only beautiful, but lovely. Her form is elegant; her features not regular, but they have the smile of sweetness and the settled complacency of good nature in the highest degree; and her complexion, now that she has happily recovered her wonted health is equal to Miss Burnet's. After the exercise of our riding to the Falls, Charlotte was exactly Dr. Donne's mistress:—

“Her pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
That one would almost say her body thought.”

Her eyes are fascinating; at once expressive of good sense, tenderness, and a noble mind.

I do not give you all this account, my good Sir, to flatter you. I mean it to reproach you. Such relations the first peer in the realm might own with pride; then why do you not keep up more correspondence with these so amiable young folks? I had a thousand questions to answer about you. I had to describe the little ones with the minuteness of anatomy. They were highly delighted when I told them that John was so good a boy, and so fine a scholar, and that Willie was going on still very pretty; but I have it in

commission to tell her from them that beauty is a poor silly bauble without she be good. Miss Chalmers I had left in Edinburgh, but I had the pleasure of meeting with Mrs. Chalmers, only Lady Mackenzie being rather a little alarmingly ill of a sore throat somewhat marred our enjoyment.

I shall not be in Ayrshire for four weeks. My most respectful compliments to Mrs. Hamilton, Miss Kennedy, and Doctor Mackenzie. I shall probably write him from some stage or other.

I am ever, Sir,

Yours most gratefully,

R. B.

LXI.

TO MR. WALKER,

BLAIR OF ATHOLE.

[*Mr. Josiah Walker, afterwards Professor; then engaged at Blair Athole as a tutor.*]

INVERNESS, 5th September, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have just time to write the foregoing, and to tell you that it was (at least most part of it) the effusion of an half-hour I spent at Bruar. I do not mean it was extempore, for I have endeavoured to brush it up as well as Mr. Nicol's chat and the jogging of the chaise would allow. It eases my heart a good deal, as rhyme is the coin with which a poet pays his debts of honour or gratitude. What I owe to the noble family of Athole, of the first kind, I shall ever proudly boast; what I owe of the last, so help me God in my hour of need! I shall never forget.

The “little angel-band!” I declare I prayed for them very sincerely to-day at the Fall of Fyers. I shall never forget the fine family-piece I saw at Blair; the amiable, the truly noble Duchess, with her smiling little seraph in her lap, at the head

of the table: the lovely "olive plants;" as the Hebrew bard finely says, round the happy mother: the beautiful Mrs. G——; the lovely, sweet Miss C——, &c I wish I had the powers of Guido to do them justice! My Lord Duke's kind hospitality—markedly kind indeed. Mr. Graham of Fintry's charms of conversation—Sir W. Murray's friendship. In short, the recollections of all that polite, agreeable company raises an honest glow in my bosom. R. B.

LXII.

TO MR. GILBERT BURNS,
MOSSGIEL.

EDINBURGH, 17th September, 1787.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I arrived here safe yesterday evening, after a tour of twenty-two days, and travelling near six hundred miles, windings included. My farthest stretch was about ten miles beyond Inverness. I went through the heart of the Highlands by Crieff, Taymouth, the famous seat of Lord Breadalbane, down the Tay, among cascades and Druidical circles of stones, to Dunkeld, a seat of the Duke of Athole; thence across Tay, and up one of his tributary streams to Blair of Athole, another of the Duke's seats, where I had the honour of spending nearly two days with his Grace and family; thence many miles through a wild country among cliffs gray with eternal snows and gloomy savage glens, till I crossed Spey and went down the stream through Strathspey—so famous in Scottish music—Badenoch, &c. till I reached Grant Castle, where I spent half a day with Sir James Grant and family; and then crossed the country for Fort George, but called by the way at Cawdor, the ancient seat of

Macbeth; there I saw the identical bed, in which tradition says King Duncan was murdered: lastly, from Fort George to Inverness.

I returned by the coast, through Nairn, Forres, and so on, to Aberdeen, thence to Stonehive, where James Burness, from Montrose, met me by appointment. I spent two days among our relations, and found our aunts, Jean and Isabel, still alive, and hale old women. John Cairn, though born the same year with our father, walks as vigorously as I can: they have had several letters from his son in New York. William Brand is likewise a stout old fellow; but further particulars I delay till I see you, which will be in two or three weeks. The rest of my stages are not worth rehearsing; warm as I was from Ossian's country, where I had seen his very grave, what cared I for fishing-towns or fertile carses? I slept at the famous Brodie of Brodie's one night, and dined at Gordon Castle next day, with the Duke, Duchess, and family. I am thinking to cause my old mare to meet me, by means of John Ronald, at Glasgow; but you shall hear farther from me before I leave Edinburgh. My duty and many compliments from the north to my mother; and my brotherly compliments to the rest. I have been trying for a berth for William, but am not likely to be successful. Farewell.—R. B.

LXIII.

TO JAMES HOY, ESQ.

[Hoy was librarian at Gordon Castle—a character of the "Dominie Sampson" kind.]

EDINBURGH, 20th October, 1787.

SIR,

I will defend my conduct in giving you this trouble, on the best

of Christian principles—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." I shall certainly, among my legacies, leave my latest curse to that unlucky predicament which hurried—tore me away from Castle Gordon. May that obstinate son of Latin prose [Nicol] be curst to Scotch mile periods, and damned to seven league paragraphs; while Declension and Conjugation, Gender, Number, and Time, under the ragged banners of Dissonance and Disarrangement, eternally rank against him in hostile array.

Allow me, Sir, to strengthen the small claim I have to your acquaintance, by the following request. An engraver, James Johnson, in Edinburgh, has, not from mercenary views, but from an honest Scotch enthusiasm, set about collecting all our native songs and setting them to music; particularly those that have never been set before. Clarke, the well-known musician, presides over the musical arrangement, and Drs. Beattie and Blacklock, Mr. Tytler of Woodhouselee, and your humble servant to the utmost of his small power, assist in collecting the old poetry, or sometimes for a fine air make a stanza, when it has no words. The brats, too tedious to mention, claim a parental pang from my bardship. I suppose it will appear in Johnson's second number—the first was published before my acquaintance with him. My request is—"Cauld Kail in Aberdeen," is one intended for this number, and I beg a copy of his Grace of Gordon's words to it, which you were so kind as to repeat to me. You may be sure we won't prefix the author's name, except you like, though I look on it as no small merit to this work that the names of many of the authors of our old Scotch songs, names almost forgotten, will be inserted. I do not well know where to write to you—I rather write at you; but if you will

be so obliging, immediately on receipt of this, as to write me a few lines, I shall perhaps pay you in kind, though not in quality. Johnson's terms are:—each number a handsome pocket volume, to consist at least of a hundred Scotch songs, with basses for the harpsichord, &c. The price to subscribers, 5s.; to non-subscribers, 6s. He will have three numbers, I conjecture.

My direction for two or three weeks will be at Mr. William Cruikshank's, St. James's-square, New-town, Edinburgh.

I am, Sir,

Yours to command,

R. B.

LXIV.

TO REV. JOHN SKINNER.

EDINBURGH, *October 25th, 1787.*

REVEREND AND VENERABLE SIR,

Accept, in plain dull prose, my most sincere thanks for the best poetical compliment I ever received. I assure you, Sir, as a poet, you have conjured up an airy demon of vanity in my fancy, which the best abilities in your other capacity would be ill able to lay. I regret, and while I live I shall regret, that when I was in the north, I had not the pleasure of paying a younger brother's dutiful respect to the author of the best Scotch song ever Scotland saw—"Tullochgorum's my delight!" The world may think slightly of the craft of song-making; if they please, but, as Job says—"O that mine adversary had written a book!"—let them try. There is a certain something in the old Scotch songs, a wild happiness of thought and expression, which peculiarly marks them, not only from English songs, but also from the modern efforts of song-wrights, in our native manner and language. The only remains of this enchantment, these spells of the imagination, rests with you. Our

true brother, Ross of Lochlee, was likewise "owre cannie"—a "wild warlock;" but now he sings among the "sons of the morning."

I have often wished, and will certainly endeavour, to form a kind of common acquaintance among all the genuine sons of Caledonian song. The world, busy in low prosaic pursuits, may overlook most of us; but "reverence thyself." The world is not our *peers*, so we challenge the jury. We can lash that world, and find ourselves a very great source of amusement and happiness independent of that world.

There is a work going on in Edinburgh, just now, which claims your best assistance. An engraver in this town has set about collecting and publishing all the Scotch songs, with the music, that can be found. Songs in the English language, if by Scotchmen, are admitted, but the music must all be Scotch. Drs. Beattie and Blacklock are lending a hand, and the first musician in town presides over that department. I have been absolutely crazed about it, collecting old stanzas, and every information remaining respecting their origin, authors, &c. &c. This last is but a very fragment business; but at the end of his second number—the first is already published—a small account will be given of the authors, particularly to preserve those of latter times. Your three songs, "Tullochgorum," "John of Badenyon," and "Ewie wi' the crookit Horn," go in this second number. I was determined, before I got your letter, to write you, begging that you would let me know where the editions of these pieces may be found, as you would wish them to continue in future times; and if you would be so kind to this undertaking as send any songs, of your own or others, that you would think proper to publish, your name will be inserted among the

other authors,—“Nill ye, will ye.” One half of Scotland already give your songs to other authors. Paper is done. I beg to hear from you; the sooner the better, as I leave Edinburgh in a fortnight or three weeks. I am, with the warmest sincerity, Sir,

Your obliged humble servant,
R. B.

LXV.

TO

MISS MARGARET CHALMERS,
HARVIESTON.

EDINR., *October 26th, 1787.*

I SEND Charlotte the first number of the songs; I would not wait for the second number; I hate delays in little marks of friendship, as I hate dissimulation in the language of the heart. I am determined to pay Charlotte a poetic compliment, if I could hit on some glorious old Scotch air, in number second. You will see a small attempt on a shred of paper in the book; but, though Dr. Blacklock commended it very highly, I am not just satisfied with it myself. I intend to make it a description of some kind: the whining cant of love, except in real passion, and by a masterly hand, is to me as insufferable as the preaching cant of old Father Smeaton, Whig-minister at Kilmaurs. Darts, flames, Cupids, loves, graces, and all that farrago, are just a Mauchline . . . a senseless rabble.

I got an excellent poetic epistle yesternight from the old, venerable author of "Tullochgorum," "John of Badenyon," &c. I suppose you know he is a clergyman. It is by far the finest poetic compliment I ever got. I will send you a copy of it.

I go on Thursday or Friday to Dumfries, to wait on Mr. Miller about his farms. Do tell that to Lady Mackenzie, that she may give

me credit for a little wisdom. "I Wisdom dwell with Prudence." What a blessed fire-side! How happy should I be to pass a winter evening under their venerable roof! and smoke a pipe of tobacco, or drink water-gruel with them! What solemn lengthened, laughter-quashing gravity of phiz! What sage remarks on the good-for-nothing sons and daughters of indolence and folly! And what frugal lessons, as we straitened the fire-side circle, on the uses of the poker and tongs!

Miss N.[inimo] is very well, and begs to be remembered in the old way to you. I used all my eloquence, all the persuasive flourishes of the hand, and heart-melting modulation of periods in my power, to urge her out to Harroston, but all in vain. My rhetoric seems quite to have lost its effect on the lovely half of mankind. I have seen the day—but that is a "tale of other years." In my conscience I believe that my heart has been so oft on fire that it is absolutely vitrified. I look on the sex with something like the admiration with which I regard the starry sky in a frosty December night. I admire the beauty of the Creator's workmanship; I am charmed with the wild but graceful eccentricity of their motions, and—wish them good night. I mean this with respect to a certain passion *dont j'ai eu l'honneur d'être un miserable esclave*: as for friendship, you and Charlotte have given me pleasure, permanent pleasure, "which the world cannot give nor take away," I hope; and which will outlast the heavens and the earth.—R. B.

LXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Without date.

I HAVE been at Dumfries, and at one visit more shall be decided about

a farm in that country. I am rather hopeless in it; but as my brother is an excellent farmer, and is, besides, an exceedingly prudent, sober man (qualities which are only a younger brother's fortune in our family), I am determined, if my Dumfries business fail me, to return into partnership with him, and at our leisure take another farm in the neighbourhood.

I assure you I look for high compliments from you and Charlotte on this very sage instance of my unfathomable, incomprehensible wisdom. Talking of Charlotte, I must tell her that I have, to the best of my power, paid her a poetic compliment, now completed. The air is admirable: true old Highland. It was the tune of a Gaelic song, which an Inverness lady sung me when I was there; and I was so charmed with it that I begged her to write me a set of it from her singing; for it had never been set before. I am fixed that it shall go in Johnson's next number; so Charlotte and you need not spend your precious time in contradicting me. I won't say the poetry is first-rate; though I am convinced it is very well; and, what is not always the case with compliments to ladies, it is not only sincere, but just.

R. B.

LXVII.

TO JAMES HOY, ESQ.,

GORDON CASTLE.

EDINBURGH, 6th November, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

I would have wrote you immediately on receipt of your kind letter, but a mixed impulse of gratitude and esteem whispered to me that I ought to send you something by way of return. When a poet owes anything, particularly when he is indebted for good offices, the payment that usually recurs to him—

the only coin indeed in which he is probably conversant—is rhyme. Johnson sends the books by the fly, as directed, and begs me to enclose his most grateful thanks: my return I intended should have been one or two poetic bagatelles which the world have not seen, or, perhaps, for obvious reasons, cannot see. These I shall send you before I leave Edinburgh. They may make you laugh a little, which, on the whole, is no bad way of spending one's precious hours and still more precious breath: at any rate, they will be, though a small, yet a very sincere mark of my respectful esteem for a gentleman whose farther acquaintance I should look upon as a peculiar obligation.

The Duke's song, independent totally of his dukeship, charms me. There is I know not what of wild happiness of thought and expression peculiarly beautiful in the old Scottish song style, of which his Grace, old venerable Skinner, the author of "Tullochgorum," &c., and the late Ross at Lochlee, of true Scottish poetic memory, are the only modern instances that I recollect, since Ramsay, with his contemporaries, and poor Bob Fergusson, went to the world of deathless existence and truly immortal song. The mob of mankind, that many-headed beast, would laugh at so serious a speech about an old song; but, as Job says, "O that mine adversary had written a book!" Those who think that composing a Scotch song is a trifling business—let them try.

I wish my Lord Duke would pay a proper attention to the Christian admonition—"Hide not your candle under a bushel," but "Let your light shine before men." I could name half a dozen dukes that I guess are a devilish deal worse employed; nay, I question if there are half a dozen better; perhaps there are not half that scanty number whom Heaven

has favoured with the tuneful, happy, and, I will say, glorious gift.

I am, dear Sir,

Your obliged humble Servant,
R. B.

LXVIII.

TO MISS CHALMERS.

EDINBURGH, *November 21, 1787.*

I HAVE one vexatious fault to the kindly-welcome, well-filled sheet which I owe to your and Charlotte's goodness—it contains too much sense, sentiment, and good spelling. It is impossible that even you two, whom I declare to my God I will give credit for any degree of excellence the sex are capable of attaining, it is impossible you can go on to correspond at that rate; so, like those who, Shenstone says, retire because they have made a good speech, I shall, after a few letters, hear no more of you. I insist that you shall write whatever comes first: what you see, what you read, what you hear, what you admire, what you dislike, trifles, bagatelles, nonsense; or to fill up a corner, e'en put down a laugh at full length. Now none of your polite hints about flattery: I leave that to your lovers, if you have or shall have any; though, thank heaven, I have found at last two girls who can be luxuriantly happy in their own minds and with one another, without that commonly necessary appendage to female bliss—a lover.

Charlotte and you are just two favourite resting-places for my soul in her wanderings through the weary, thorny wilderness of this world. God knows I am ill-fitted for the struggle. I glory in being a Poet, and I want to be thought a wise man—I would fondly be generous, and I wish to be rich. After all, I am afraid I am a lost subject. "Some folk hae a hantle o' fauts, an' I'm but a ne'er-do-weel."

Afternoon.—To close the melancholy reflections at the end of last sheet, I shall just add a piece of devotion commonly known in Carrick by the title of the "Wabster's grace:"

"Some say we're thieves, and e'en sae are we,
Some say we lie, and e'en sae do we!
Gude forgie us, and I hope sae will he!
—Up and to your looms, lads."

R. B.

LXIX.

TO ROBERT AINSLIE, ESQ.,
EDINBURGH.

EDINBURGH, *Sunday Morning,*
November 23rd, 1787.

I BEG, my dear Sir, you would not make any appointment to take us to Mr. Ainslie's to-night. On looking over my engagements, constitution, present state of my health, some little vexatious soul concerns, &c., I find I can't sup abroad to-night. I shall be in to-day till one o'clock, if you have a leisure hour.

You will think it romantic when I tell you, that I find the idea of your friendship almost necessary to my existence. You assume a proper length of face in my bitter hours of blue-devilism, and you laugh fully up to my highest wishes at my good things. I don't know upon the whole, if you are one of the first fellows in God's world, but you are so to me. I tell you this just now in the conviction that some inequalities in my temper and manner may perhaps sometimes make you suspect that I am not so warmly as I ought to be your friend.—R. B.

LXX.

TO MISS MABANE [AFTERWARDS
MRS. COL. WRIGHT].

Saturday noon,
NO. 2, ST. JAMES'S SQUARE,
NEW TOWN, EDINBURGH.

HERE have I sat, my dear Madam, in the stony altitude of perplexed

study for fifteen vexatious minutes, my head askew, bending over the intended card; my fixed eye insensible to the very light of day poured around; my pendulous goose-feather, loaded with ink, hanging over the future letter, all for the important purpose of writing a complimentary card to accompany your trinket.

Compliment is such a miserable Greenland expression, lies at such a chilly polar distance from the torrid zone of my constitution, that I cannot, for the very soul of me, use it to any person for whom I have the twentieth part of the esteem every one must have for you who knows you.

As I leave town in three or four days, I can give myself the pleasure of calling on you only for a minute. Tuesday evening, some time about seven or after, I shall wait on you for your farewell commands.

The hinge of your box I put into the hands of the proper connoisseur. The broken glass, likewise, went under review; but deliberative wisdom thought it would too much endanger the whole fabric.

I am, dear Madam,
With all sincerity of enthusiasm,
Your very obedient Servant,
R. B.

LXXI.

TO SIR JOHN WHITEFOORD.

[EDINBURGH, *December, 1787.*]

SIR,

Mr. Mackenzie, in Mauchline, my very warm and worthy friend, has informed me how much you are pleased to interest yourself in my fate as a man, and (what to me is incomparably dearer) my fame as a poet. I have, Sir, in one or two instances, been patronised by those of your character in life, when I was introduced to their notice by social friends to them, and

honoured acquaintances to me; but you are the first gentleman in the country whose benevolence and goodness of heart has interested himself for me, unsolicited and unknown. I am not master enough of the etiquette of these matters to know, nor did I stay to inquire, whether formal duty bade, or cold propriety disallowed, my thanking you in this manner, as I am convinced, from the light in which you kindly view me, that you will do me the justice to believe this letter is not the manoeuvre of the needy, sharpening author, fastening on those in upper life, who honour him with a little notice of him or his works. Indeed, the situation of poets is generally such, to a proverb, as may, in some measure, palliate that prostitution of heart and talents they have at times been guilty of. I do not think prodigality is, by any means, a necessary concomitant of a poetic turn, but I believe a careless, indolent attention to economy is almost inseparable from it; then there must be in the heart of every bard of Nature's making, a certain modest sensibility, mixed with a kind of pride, that will ever keep him out of the way of those wind-falls of fortune which frequently light on hardy impudence and foot-licking servility. It is not easy to imagine a more helpless state than his whose poetic fancy unfits him for the world, and whose character as a scholar gives him some pretensions to the *politesse* of life—yet is as poor as I am.

For my part, I thank Heaven my star has been kinder; learning never elevated my ideas above the peasant's shed, and I have an independent fortune at the plough-tail.

I was surprised to hear that any one who pretended in the least to the manners of the gentleman, should be so foolish, or worse, as to stoop to traduce the morals of

such a one as I am, and so inhumanly cruel, too, as to meddle with that late most unfortunate, unhappy part of my story. With a tear of gratitude, I thank you, Sir, for the warmth with which you interposed in behalf of my conduct. I am, I acknowledge, too frequently the sport of whim, caprice, and passion, but reverence to God, and integrity to my fellow-creatures, I hope I shall ever preserve. I have no return, Sir, to make you for your goodness but one—a return which I am persuaded will not be unacceptable—the honest, warm wishes of a grateful heart for your happiness, and every one of that lovely flock, who stand to you in a filial relation. If ever calumny aim the poisoned shaft at them, may friendship be by to ward the blow!—R. B.

LXXII.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

[EDINBURGH, *December, 1787.*]

MY DEAR SIR,

It is indeed with the highest pleasure that I congratulate you on the return of days of ease and nights of pleasure, after the horrid hours of misery in which I saw you suffering existence when last in Ayrshire; I seldom pray for anybody, "I'm baith dead-sweer and wretched ill o't;" but most fervently do I beseech the Power that directs the world, that you may live long and be happy, but live no longer than you are happy. It is needless for me to advise you to have a reverend care of your health. I know you will make it a point never at one time to drink more than a pint of wine (I mean an English pint), and that you will never be witness to more than one bowl of punch at a time, and that cold drams you will never more taste; and, above all things,

I am convinced, that after drinking perhaps boiling punch, you will never mount your horse and gallop home in a chill late hour. Above all things, as I understand you are in habits of intimacy with that Boanerges of gospel powers, Father Auld, be earnest with him that he will wrestle in prayer for you, that you may see the vanity of vanities in trusting to, or even practising, the casual moral works of Christianity. humanity, generosity, and forgiveness of things, which you practised so flagrantly that it was evident you delighted in them, neglecting, or perhaps profanely despising, the wholesome doctrine of faith without works, the only author of salvation. A hymn of thanksgiving would, in my opinion, be highly becoming from you at present, and in my zeal for your well-being, I earnestly press on you to be diligent in chaunting over the two enclosed pieces of sacred poesy. My best compliments to Mrs. Hamilton and Miss Kennedy.

Yours, &c.

R. B.

LXXIII.

TO MISS CHALMERS.

EDINBURGH, *December, 1787.*

MY DEAR MADAM,

I just now have read yours. The poetic compliments I pay cannot be misunderstood. They are neither of them so particular as to point you out to the world at large; and the circle of your acquaintances will allow all I have said. Besides, I have complimented you chiefly, almost solely, on your mental charms. Shall I be plain with you? I will; so look to it. Personal attractions, Madam, you have much above par; wit, understanding, and worth, you possess in the first class. This is a cursed flat way of telling

you these truths, but let me hear no more of your sheepish timidity. I know the world a little. I know what they will say of my poems; by second sight I suppose, for I am seldom out in my conjectures; and you may believe me, my dear Madam, I would not run any risk of hurting you by any ill-judged compliment. I wish to show the world the odds between a poet's friends and those of simple prose-men. More for your information, both the pieces go in. One of them, "Where braving angry winter's storms," is already set—the tune is "Neil Gow's Lamentation for Abercainey;" the other is to be set to an old Highland air in Daniel Dow's collection of ancient Scots music; the name is "*Ha a Chaillich air mo Dheidh.*" My treacherous memory has forgot every circumstance about *Les Incas*, only I think you mentioned them as being in Creech's possession. I shall ask him about it. I am afraid the song of "Somebody" will come too late—as I shall, for certain, leave town in a week for Ayrshire, and from that to Dumfries, but there my hopes are slender. I leave my direction in town, so anything, wherever I am, will reach me.

I saw yours to —; it is not too severe, nor did he take it amiss. On the contrary, like a whipped spaniel, he talks of being with you in the Christmas days. Mr. Tait has given him the invitation, and he is determined to accept of it. O selfishness! he owns, in his sober moments, that from his own volatility of inclination, the circumstances in which he is situated, and his knowledge of his father's disposition, the whole affair is chimerical—yet he *will* gratify an idle *penchant* at the enormous, cruel expense of perhaps ruining the peace of the very woman for whom he professes the generous passion of love! He is a gentleman

in his mind and manners—*tant pis!* He is a volatile schoolboy—the heir of a man's fortune who well knows the value of two times two!

Perdition seize them and their fortunes, before they should make the amiable, the lovely —, the derided object of their purse-proud contempt!

I am doubly happy to hear of Mrs —'s recovery, because I really thought all was over with her. There are days of pleasure yet awaiting her:

"As I came in by Glenap,
I met with an aged woman;
She bade me cheer up my heart,
For the best o' my days was comin'."

This day will decide my affairs with Creech. Things are, like myself, not what they ought to be; yet better than what they appear to be.

"Heaven's Sovereign saves all beings, but
Himself,
That hideous sight—a naked human heart."

Farewell! remember me to Charlotte.
R. B.

LXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

EDINBURGH, Dec. 12, 1787.

I AM here under the care of a surgeon, with a bruised limb extended on a cushion; and the tints of my mind vying with the livid horror preceding a midnight thunderstorm. A drunken coachman was the cause of the first, and incomparably the lightest evil; misfortune, bodily constitution, hell, and myself, have formed a "quadruple alliance" to guarantee the other. I got my fall on Saturday, and am getting slowly better.

I have taken tooth and nail to the Bible, and am got through the five books of Moses, and half-way in Joshua. It is really a glorious book. I sent for my bookbinder to-day, and ordered him to get me an octavo Bible in sheets, the best paper and

print in town, and bind it with all the elegance of his craft.

I would give my best song to my worst enemy—I mean the merit of making it—to have you and Charlotte by me. You are angelic creatures, and would pour oil and wine into my wounded spirit.

I enclose you a proof copy of the *Banks of the Devon*, which present with my best wishes to Charlotte. The *Ochil-hills* you shall probably have next week for yourself. None of your fine speeches!—R. B.

LXXV.

TO CHARLES HAY, ESQ.,

ADVOCATE.

[*Enclosing verses on the death of the Lord President, Robert Dundas of Arncliffe, who died December 13, 1787.*]

SIR,

The enclosed poem was written in consequence of your suggestion last time I had the pleasure of seeing you. It cost me an hour or two of next morning's sleep, but did not please me; so it lay by, an ill-digested effort, till the other day that I gave it a critic brush. These kind of subjects are much hackneyed; and, besides, the wailings of the rhyming tribe over the ashes of the great are cursedly suspicious, and out of all character for sincerity. These ideas damped my muse's fire; however, I have done the best I could, and, at all events, it gives me an opportunity of declaring that I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obliged humble Servant,
R. B.

LXXVI.

TO MISS CHALMERS.

EDINBURGH, 19th Dec. 1787.

I BEGIN this letter in answer to yours of the 17th current, which is

not yet cold since I read it. The atmosphere of my soul is vastly clearer than when I wrote you last. For the first time, yesterday I crossed the room on crutches. It would do your heart good to see my bardship, not on poetic, but on my oaken stilts; throwing my best leg with an air, and with as much hilarity in my gait and countenance, as a May frog leaping across the newly-harrowed ridge, enjoying the fragrance of the refreshed earth after the long-expected shower!

I can't say I am altogether at my ease when I see anywhere in my path that meagre, squalid, famine-faced spectre Poverty; attended as he always is by iron-fisted Oppression, and leering Contempt; but I have sturdily withstood his buffetings many a hard-laboured day already, and still my motto is—I DARE! My worst enemy is *moi-même*. I lie so miserably open to the inroads and incursions of a mischievous, light-armed, well-mounted banditti, under the banners of imagination, whim, caprice, and passion, and the heavy-armed veteran regulars of wisdom, prudence, and forethought move so very, very slow, that I am almost in a state of perpetual warfare, and alas! frequent defeat. There are just two creatures I would envy—a horse in his wild state traversing the forests of Asia, or an oyster on some of the desert shores of Europe. The one has not a wish without enjoyment, the other has neither wish nor fear.

R. B.

LXXVII.

TO MR. RICHARD BROWN,
IRVINE.

EDINBURGH, 30th Dec. 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have met with few things in life which have given me more pleasure than Fortune's kindness to

you since those days in which we met in the vale of misery; as I can honestly say, that I never knew a man who more truly deserved it, or to whom my heart more truly wished it. I have been much indebted since that time to your story and sentiments for steeling my mind against evils, of which I have had a pretty decent share. My Will-o'-wisp fate you know: do you recollect a Sunday we spent together in Eglinton Woods? You told me, on my repeating some verses to you, that you wondered I could resist the temptation of sending verses of such merit to a magazine. It was from this remark I derived that idea of my own pieces which encouraged me to endeavour at the character of a poet. I am happy to hear that you will be two or three months at home. As soon as a bruised limb will permit me, I shall return to Ayrshire, and we shall meet; "and faith I hope we'll not sit dumb, nor yet cast out!"

I have much to tell you "of men, their manners, and their ways;" perhaps a little of the other sex. Apropos, I beg to be remembered to Mrs. Brown. There, I doubt not, my dear friend, but you have found substantial happiness. I expect to find you something of an altered, but not a different man: the wild, bold, generous young fellow composed into the steady affectionate husband, and the fond careful parent. For me, I am just the same Will-o'-wisp being I used to be. About the first and fourth quarters of the moon, I generally set in for the trade wind of wisdom; but about the full and change, I am the luckless victim of mad tornadoes, which blow me into chaos. All-mighty love still reigns and revels in my bosom; and I am at this moment ready to hang myself for a young Edinburgh widow, who has wit and wisdom more murderously fatal than the assassinating

stiletto of the Sicilian bandit, or the poisoned arrow of the savage African. My Highland dirk, that used to hang beside my crutches, I have gravely removed into a neighbouring closet, the key of which I cannot command, in case of spring-tide paroxysms. You may guess of her wit by the following verses which she sent me the other day.

My best compliments to our friend Allan. Adieu!

R. B.

LXXVIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

EDINBURGH, *January 21, 1788.*

AFTER six weeks' confinement, I am beginning to walk across the room. They have been six horrible weeks; anguish and low spirits made me unfit to read, write, or think.

I have a hundred times wished that one could resign life as an officer resigns a commission; for I would not take in any poor ignorant wretch, by selling out. Lately I was a sixpenny private, and, God knows, a miserable soldier enough; now I march to the campaign, a starving cadet—a little more conspicuously wretched.

I am ashamed of all this; for though I do want bravery for the warfare of life, I could wish, like some other soldiers, to have as much fortitude or cunning as to dissemble or conceal my cowardice.

As soon as I can bear the journey, which will be, I suppose, about the middle of next week, I leave Edinburgh; and soon after I shall pay my grateful duty at Dunlop House.—R. B.

LXXIX.

TO MISS CHALMERS.

[*22nd Jan. 1788.*]

Now for that wayward unfortunate thing, myself. I have broke

measures with Creech, and last week I wrote him a frosty, keen letter. He replied in terms of chastisement, and promised me upon his honour that I should have the account on Monday; but this is Tuesday, and yet I have not heard a word from him. God have mercy on me! a poor damned, incautious, duped, unfortunate fool! The sport, the miserable victim of rebellious pride, hypochondriac imagination, agonizing sensibility, and bedlam passions.

"I wish that I were dead, but I'm not like to die!" I had lately "a hairbreadth 'scape in th' imminent deadly breach" of love, too. Thank my stars, I got off heart-whole, "waur fleyed than hurt."—Interruption.

I have this moment got a hint . . . I fear I am something like—undone—but I hope for the best. Come, stubborn pride, and unshrinking resolution; accompany me through this, to me, miserable world! You must not desert me. Your friendship I think I can count on, though I should date my letters from a marching regiment. Early in life, and all my life, I reckoned on a recruiting drum as my forlorn-hope. Seriously, though, life presents me with but a melancholy path: but—my limb will soon be sound, and I shall struggle on.—R. B.

LXXX.

TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ.,
OF FINTRAY.

[*EDINR., Jan. 1788.*]

SIR,

When I had the honour of being introduced to you at Athole House, I did not so soon think of asking a favour of you. When Lear, in Shakespeare, asked old Kent why he wished to be in his service, he

answers: "Because you have that in your face which I would fain call master." For some such reason, Sir, do I now solicit your patronage. You know, I dare say, of an application I lately made to your Board to be admitted an officer of Excise. I have, according to form, been examined by a supervisor, and to-day I gave in his certificate, with a request for an order for instructions. In this affair, if I succeed, I am afraid I shall but too much need a patronising friend. Propriety of conduct as a man, and fidelity and attention as an officer, I dare engage for; but with anything like business, except manual labour, I am totally unacquainted.

I had intended to have closed my late appearance on the stage of life in the character of a country farmer; but after discharging some filial and fraternal claims, I find I could only fight for existence in that miserable manner which I have lived to see throw a venerable parent into the jaws of a jail; whence death, the poor man's last and often best friend, rescued him.

I know, Sir, that to need your goodness is to have a claim on it; may I, therefore, beg your patronage to forward me in this affair, till I be appointed to a division—where, by the help of rigid economy, I will try to support that independence so dear to my soul, but which has been too often so distant from my situation.—R. B.

LXXXI.

TO THE EARL OF
GLENCAIRN.

[EDIN^R. Jan. 1788.]

MY LORD,

I know your lordship will disapprove of my ideas in a request I am going to make to you; but I

have weighed, long and seriously weighed, my situation, my hopes, and turn of mind, and am fully fixed to my scheme if I can possibly effectuate it. I wish to get into the Excise: I am told that your lordship's interest will easily procure me the grant from the commissioners; and your lordship's patronage and goodness, which have already rescued me from obscurity, wretchedness, and exile, embolden me to ask that interest. You have likewise put it in my power to save the little tie of home that sheltered an aged mother, two brothers, and three sisters, from destruction. There, my lord, you have bound me over to the highest gratitude.

My brother's farm is but a wretched lease, but I think he will probably weather out the remaining seven years of it; and after the assistance which I have given, and will give him, to keep the family together, I think, by my guess, I shall have rather better than two hundred pounds; and instead of seeking, what is almost impossible at present to find, a farm that I can certainly live by, with so small a stock, I shall lodge this sum in a banking-house, a sacred deposit, excepting only the calls of uncommon distress or necessitous old age.

These, my lord, are my views: I have resolved from the maturest deliberation; and now I am fixed, I shall leave no stone unturned to carry my resolve into execution. Your lordship's patronage is the strength of my hopes; nor have I yet applied to anybody else. Indeed, my heart sinks within me at the idea of applying to any other of the great who have honoured me with their countenance. I am ill-qualified to dog the heels of greatness with the impertinence of solicitation, and tremble nearly as much at the thought of the cold promise as the cold denial; but to your lordship I

have not only the honour, the comfort, but the pleasure of being,

Your lordship's much and deeply indebted humble Servant,

R. B.

LXXXII.

TO MR. JAMES CANDLISH.

[EDINBURGH, 1788.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

If once I were gone from this scene of hurry and bustle, I promise myself the pleasure of that correspondence being renewed which has been so long broken. At present I have time for nothing. Dissipation and business engross every moment. I am engaged in assisting an honest Scotch enthusiast, a friend of mine, who is an engraver, and has taken it into his head to publish a collection of all our songs set to music, of which the words and music are done by Scotsmen. This, you will easily guess, is an undertaking exactly to my taste. I have collected, begged, borrowed, and stolen, all the songs I could meet with. "Pompey's Ghost," words and music, I beg from you immediately, to go into his second number—the first is already published. I shall shew you the first number when I see you in Glasgow, which will be in a fortnight or less. Do be so kind as to send me the song in a day or two—you cannot imagine how much it will oblige me.

Direct to me at Mr. W. Cruikshank's, St. James's Square, New Town, Edinburgh.—R. B.

LXXXIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

EDINBURGH, February 12, 1788.

SOME things in your late letters hurt me : not that you *say them*, but

that *you mistake me*. Religion, my honoured Madam, has not only been all my life my chief dependence, but my dearest enjoyment. I have indeed been the luckless victim of wayward follies ; but, alas ! I have ever been "more fool than knave." A mathematician without religion is a probable character ; an irreligious poet is a monster.—R. B.

LXXXIV.

TO THE REV. JOHN SKINNER.

EDINBURGH, 14th February, 1788.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

I have been a cripple now near three months, though I am getting vastly better, and have been very much hurried besides or else I would have wrote you sooner. I must beg your pardon for the epistle you sent me appearing in the magazine. I had given a copy or two to some of my intimate friends, but did not know of the printing of it till the publication of the magazine. However, as it does great honour to us both, you will forgive it.

The second volume of the songs I mentioned to you in my last is published to-day. I send you a copy, which I beg you will accept as a mark of the veneration I have long had, and shall ever have, for your character, and of the claim I make to your continued acquaintance. Your songs appear in the third volume, with your name in the index ; as I assure you, Sir, I have heard your "Tullochgorum," particularly among our west-country folks, given to many different names, and most commonly to the immortal author of "The Minstrel," who indeed never wrote anything superior to "Gie's a sang, Montgomery cried." Your brother has promised me your verses to the Marquis of

Huntly's reel, which certainly deserve a place in the collection. My kind host, Mr. Cruikshank, of the High School here, and said to be one of the best Latins in this age, begs me to make you his grateful acknowledgments for the entertainment he has got in a Latin publication of yours, that I borrowed for him from your acquaintance, and much-respected friend in this place, the Reverend Dr. Webster. Mr. Cruikshank maintains that you write the best Latin since Buchanan. I leave Edinburgh to-morrow, but shall return in three weeks. Your song you mentioned in your last, to the tune of "Dumbarton Drums," and the other, which you say was done by a brother in trade of mine, a ploughman, I shall thank you for a copy of each.

I am ever, reverend Sir,
With the most respectful esteem and
sincere veneration, yours,

R. B.

LXXXV.

TO MR. RICHARD BROWN.

EDINBURGH, *February 15, 1788.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received yours with the greatest pleasure. I shall arrive at Glasgow on Monday evening; and beg, if possible, you will meet me on Tuesday. I shall wait on you Tuesday all day. I shall be found at Durie's Black Bull Inn. I am hurried, as if hunted by fifty devils, else I should go to Greenock; but if you cannot possibly come, write me, if possible, to Glasgow, on Monday; or direct to me at Mossgiel by Mauchline; and name a day and place in Ayrshire, within a fortnight from this date, where I may meet you. I only stay a fortnight in Ayrshire, and return to Edinburgh.

I am ever, my dearest Friend, yours,
R. B.

LXXXVI.

TO MISS CHALMERS.

EDINBURGH, *Sunday [Feb. 17, 1788].*

TO-MORROW, my dear Madam, I leave Edinburgh. I have altered all my plans of future life. A farm that I could live in, I could not find; and, indeed, after the necessary support my brother and the rest of the family required, I could not venture on farming in that style suitable to my feelings. You will condemn me for the next step I have taken: I have entered into the Excise. I stay in the west about three weeks, and then return to Edinburgh for six weeks' instructions; afterwards, for I get employ instantly, I go *où il plaît à Dieu—et mon roi*. I have chosen this, my dear friend, after mature deliberation. The question is not at what door of fortune's palace shall we enter in, but what doors does she open to us? I was not likely to get anything to do. I wanted *un bû*, which is a dangerous, an unhappy situation. I got this without any hanging on, or mortifying solicitation: it is immediate and; and though poor in comparison of the last eighteen months of my existence, 'tis luxury in comparison of all my preceding life: besides, the commissioners are some of them my acquaintances, and all of them my firm friends.—R. B.

LXXXVII.

TO MRS. ROSE,
OF KILRAVOCK.

EDINBURGH, *February 17, 1788.*

MADAM,

You are much indebted to some indispensable business I have had on my hands, otherwise my gratitude threatened such a return for your obliging favour as would have tired your patience. It but poorly expresses my feelings to say,

that I am sensible of your kindness. It may be said of hearts such as yours is, and such, I hope, mine is, much more justly than Addison applies it—

"Some souls by instinct to each other turn "

There was something in my reception at Kilravock so different from the cold, obsequious, dancing-school bow of politeness, that it almost got into my head that friendship had occupied her ground without the intermediate march of acquaintance. I wish I could transcribe, or rather transfuse into language, the glow of my heart when I read your letter. My ready fancy, with colours more mellow than life itself, painted the beautiful wild scenery of Kilravock; the venerable grandeur of the castle; the spreading woods; the winding river, gladly leaving his unsightly, heathy source, and lingering with apparent delight as he passes the fairy walk at bottom of the garden; your late distressful anxieties; your present enjoyments; your dear little angel, the pride of your hopes; my aged friend, venerable in worth and years, whose loyalty and other virtues will strongly entitle her to the support of the Almighty Spirit here, and His peculiar favour in a happier state of existence. You cannot imagine, Madam, how much such feelings delight me: they are my dearest proofs of my own immortality. Should I never revisit the north, as probably I never will, nor again see your hospitable mansion, were I some twenty years' hence to see your little fellow's name making a proper figure in a newspaper paragraph, my heart would bound with pleasure.

I am assisting a friend in a collection of Scottish songs, set to their proper tunes; every air worth preserving is to be included: among

others I have given "Morag," and some few Highland airs which pleased me most, a dress which will be more generally known, though far, far inferior in real merit. As a small mark of my grateful esteem, I beg leave to present you with a copy of the work, as far as it is printed: the *Man of Feeling*, that first of men, has promised to transmit it by the first opportunity.

I beg to be remembered most respectfully to my venerable friend and to your little Highland chieftain. When you see the "two fair spirits of the hill" at Kildrummie, tell them that I have done myself the honour of setting myself down as one of their admirers for at least twenty years to come—consequently they must look upon me as an acquaintance for the same period; but, as the Apostle Paul says, "this I ask of grace, not of debt."

I have the honour to be, Madam, &c.
R. B.

LXXXVIII.

TO MR. RICHARD BROWN.

MOSSGIEL, 24th February, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I arrived here, at my brother's, only yesterday, after fighting my way through Paisley and Kilmarnock against those old powerful foes of mine—the devil, the world, and the flesh; so terrible in the fields of dissipation. I have met with few incidents in my life which gave me so much pleasure as meeting you in Glasgow. There is a time of life beyond which we cannot form a tie worth the name of friendship. "Oh youth! enchanting stage, profusely blest." Life is a fairy scene, almost all that deserves the name of enjoyment or pleasure is only a charming delusion; and in comes repining age, in all the gravity of hoary wisdom, and wretchedly

chases away the bewitching phantom. When I think of life, I resolve to keep a strict look-out in the course of economy, for the sake of worldly convenience and independence of mind; to cultivate intimacy with a few of the companions of youth, that they may be the friends of age; never to refuse my liquorish humour a handful of the sweetmeats of life, when they come not too dear; and, for futurity—

The present moment is our ain,
The neist we never saw!

How like you my philosophy?
Give my best compliments to
Mrs. B., and believe me to be,
My dear Sir, yours most truly,

R. B.

LXXXIX.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

[*This letter refers to a proposal that Robert should become guarantee for his brother for a considerable amount.*]

MOSSGIEL, Friday Morning.

THE language of refusal is to me the most difficult language on earth, and you are the man in the world, excepting one of Right Honourable designation, to whom it gives me the greatest pain to hold such language. My brother has already got money, and shall want nothing in my power to enable him to fulfil his engagement with you; but to be security on so large a scale, even for a brother, is what I dare not do, except I were in such circumstances of life as that the worst that might happen could not greatly injure me.

I never wrote a letter which gave me so much pain in my life, as I know the unhappy consequences: I shall incur the displeasure of a gentleman for whom I have the highest respect, and to whom I am deeply obliged.

I am ever, Sir, your obliged and
very humble Servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

XC.

TO

MR. WILLIAM CRUIKSHANK.

MAUCHLINE, 3d March, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

Apologies for not writing are frequently like apologies for not singing—the apology better than the song. I have fought my way severely through the savage hospitality of this country, (the object of all hosts being) to send every guest drunk to bed if they can.

I executed your commission in Glasgow, and I hope the cocoa came safe. 'Twas the same price and the very same kind as your former parcel, for the gentleman recollected your buying there perfectly well.

I should return my thanks for your — hospitality (I leave a blank for the epithet, as I know none can do it justice) to a poor wayfaring bard, who was spent and almost overpowered fighting with prosaic wickedness in high places; but I am afraid lest you should burn the letter whenever you come to the passage, so I pass over it in silence. I am just returned from visiting Mr. Miller's farm. The friend whom I told you I would take with me was highly pleased with the farm; and as he is, without exception, the most intelligent farmer in the country, he has staggered me a good deal. I have the two plans of life before me: I shall balance them to the best of my judgment, and fix on the most eligible. I have written Mr. Miller, and shall wait on him when I come to town, which shall be the beginning or middle of next week: I would be in sooner, but my unlucky knee is rather worse, and I fear for some time will scarcely stand the fatigue of my Excise instructions. I only mention these ideas to you; and, indeed,

except Mr. Ainslie, whom I intend writing to to-morrow, I will not write at all to Edinburgh till I return to it. I would send my compliments to Mr. Nicol, but he would be hurt if he knew I wrote to anybody, and not to him; so I shall only beg my best, kindest compliments to my worthy hostess and the sweet little Rosebud.

So soon as I am settled in the routine of life, either as an Excise-officer or as a farmer, I propose myself great pleasure from a regular correspondence with the only man almost I ever saw who joined the most attentive prudence with the warmest generosity.

I am much interested for that best of men, Mr. Wood. I hope he is in better health and spirits than when I saw him last.

I am ever, my dearest Friend,
Your obliged, humble Servant,
R. B.

XCI.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

MAUCHLINE, *3d March, 1788.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am just returned from Mr. Miller's farm. My old friend whom I took with me was highly pleased with the bargain, and advised me to accept of it. He is the most intelligent, sensible farmer in the county, and his advice has staggered me a good deal. I have the two plans before me: I shall endeavour to balance them to the best of my judgment, and fix on the most eligible. On the whole, if I find Mr. Miller in the same favourable disposition as when I saw him last, I shall in all probability turn farmer.

I have been through sore tribulation, and under much buffetting of the Wicked One, since I came to this country. Jean I found banished like a martyr—forlorn, destitute, and

friendless. I have reconciled her to her mother: I have taken her a room: I have taken her to my arms: I have given her a mahogany bed: I have given her a guinea: and I have embraced her till she rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But—as I always am on every occasion—I have been prudent and cautious to an astounding degree: I swore her privately and solemnly, never to attempt any claim on me as a husband, even though anybody should persuade her she had such a claim, which she had not, neither during my life, nor after my death. She did all this like a good girl, and . . . O! what a peacemaker is &c. &c. . . .

I shall be in Edinburgh the middle of next week. My farming ideas I shall keep private till I see. I got a letter from Clarinda yesterday, and she tells me she has got no letter of mine but one. Tell her that I wrote to her from Glasgow, from Kilmarnock, from Mauchline, and yesterday from Cumnock, as I returned from Dumfries. Indeed, she is the only person in Edinburgh I have written to till this day. How are your soul and body putting up?—a little like man and wife, I suppose.

Your faithful Friend,
R. B.

XCII.

TO MR. RICHARD BROWN.

MAUCHLINE, *7th March, 1788.*

I HAVE been out of the country, my dear friend, and have not had an opportunity of writing till now, when I am afraid you will be gone out of the country too. I have been looking at farms, and after all, perhaps I may settle in the character of a farmer. I have got so vicious a bent to idleness, and have ever been so little a man of business, that it will take no ordinary effort

to bring my mind properly into the routine; but you will say a "great effort is worthy of you." I say so myself, and butter up my vanity with all the stimulating compliments I can think of. Men of grave geometrical minds, the sons of "which was to be demonstrated," may cry up reason as much as they please; but I have always found an honest passion, or native instinct, the truest auxiliary in the warfare of this world. Reason almost always comes to me like an unlucky wife to a poor devil of a husband—just in sufficient time to add her reproaches to his other grievances.

I found Jean with her cargo very well laid in, but unfortunately moored almost at the mercy of wind and tide. I have towed her into a convenient harbour, where she may lie snug till she unload, and have taken the command myself, not ostensibly, but for a time in secret.

I am gratified with your kind inquiries after her; as, after all, I may say with Othello—

— "Excellent wretch!
Perdition catch my soul, but I do love thee!"

I go for Edinburgh on Monday.
Yours, R. B.

XCIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

MOSSGIEL, 7th March, 1788.

MADAM,

The last paragraph in yours of the 30th February affected me most, so I shall begin my answer where you ended your letter. That I am often a sinner, with any little wit I have, I do confess: but I have taxed my recollection to no purpose to find out when it was employed against you. I hate an ungenerous sarcasm a great deal worse than I do the devil—at least as Milton describes him; and though I may be rascally enough to be sometimes guilty of it myself, I cannot endure it in others. You, my

honoured friend, who cannot appear in any light but you are sure of being respectable—you can afford to pass by an occasion to display your wit, because you may depend for fame on your sense; or, if you choose to be silent, you know you can rely on the gratitude of many and the esteem of all; but God help us who are wits or witlings by profession: if we stand not for fame there, we sink unsupported!

I am highly flattered by the news you tell me of Coila. I may say to the fair painter who does me so much honour, as Dr. Beattie says to Ross, the poet of his muse Scots, from which, by the by, I took the idea of Coila ('tis a poem of Beattie's in the Scottish dialect, which perhaps you have never seen):—

"Ye shake your head, but o' my fegs,
Ye've set aule Scotia on her legs:
Lang had she danc'd wi' bulfs and flees,
Burnin' d and dizzie,
Her fiddle wanted strings and pegs,
Wae's me, poor hizzie."
R. B.

XCIV.

TO MR. ROBERT MUIR.

MOSSGIEL, 7th March, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

I have partly changed my ideas, my dear friend, since I saw you. I took old Glenconner with me to Mr. Miller's farm; and he was so pleased with it, that I have wrote an offer to Mr. Miller, which if he accepts, I shall sit down a plain farmer—the happiest of lives when a man can live by it. In this case I shall not stay in Edinburgh above a week. I set out on Monday, and would have come by Kilmarnock, but there are several small sums owing me for my first edition about Galston and Newmills, and I shall set off so early as to despatch my business and reach Glasgow by night. When I return, I shall devote a forenoon or two to make

some kind of acknowledgment for all the kindness I owe your friendship. Now that I hope to settle with some credit and comfort at home, there was not any friendship or friendly correspondence that promised me more pleasure than yours; I hope I will not be disappointed. I trust the spring will renew your shattered frame, and make your friends happy. You and I have often agreed that life is no great blessing, on the whole. The close of life, indeed, to a reasoning age, is

"Dark as was Chaos, ere the infant sun
Was rolled together, or had tried his beams
Athwart the gloom profound."

But an honest man has nothing to fear. If we lie down in the grave, the whole man a piece of broken machinery, to moulder with the clods of the valley, be it so; at least there is an end of pain, care, woes, and wants: if that part of us called mind does survive the apparent destruction of the man—away with old-wife prejudices and tales! Every age and every nation has had a different set of stories; and as the many are always weak, of consequence they have often, perhaps always, been deceived. A man conscious of having acted an honest part among his fellow-creatures—even granting that he may have been the sport at times of passions and instincts—he goes to a great unknown Being, who could have no other end in giving him existence but to make him happy; who gave him those passions and instincts, and well knows their force.

These, my worthy friend, are my ideas; and I know they are not far different from yours. It becomes a man of sense to think for himself, particularly in a case where all men are equally interested, and where, indeed, all men are equally in the dark.

Adieu, my dear Sir. God send us a cheerful meeting!—R. B.

XCV.

[TO ———?]

[The address on the back of this letter has been torn off, and there is doubt as to the individual correspondent to whom it was written. The recipient may have been William Nicol, Robert Ainslie, Robert Cleghorn, or Alexander Cunningham.]

MAC CHLINE,

[Between 3d and 8th March, 1788.]

MY DEAR SIR,

My life, since I saw you last, has been one continued hurry; that savage hospitality which knocks a man down with strong liquors is the devil. I have a sore warfare in this world—the devil, the world, and the flesh, are three formidable foes. The first I generally try to fly from; the second, alas! generally flies from me; but the third is my plague—worse than the ten plagues of Egypt.

I have been looking over several farms in this country; one, in particular, in Nithsdale, pleased me so well, that if my offer to the proprietor is accepted, I shall commence farmer at Whitsunday. If farming do not appear eligible, I shall have recourse to my other shift [the Excise]: but this to a friend.

I set out for Edinburgh on Monday morning: how long I stay there is uncertain, but you will know so soon as I can inform you myself. However, I determined poesy must be laid aside for some time; my mind has been vitiated with idleness, and it will take a good deal of effort to habituate it to the routine of business.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

R. B.

XCVI.

TO MISS CHALMERS.

EDINBURGH, March 14, 1788.

I KNOW, my ever dear friend, that you will be pleased with the news

when I tell you, I have at last taken a lease of a farm. Yesternight I completed a bargain with Mr Miller of Dalswinton for the farm of Ellisland, on the banks of the Nith, between five and six miles above Dumfries. I began at Whitsunday to build a house, drive lime, &c. ; and Heaven be my help ! for it will take a strong effort to bring my mind into the routine of business. I have discharged all the army of my former pursuits, fancies, and pleasures—a motley host!—and have literally and strictly retained only the ideas of a few friends, which I have incorporated into a lifeguard. I trust in Dr. Johnson's observation, "Where much is attempted, something is done." Firmness, both in sufferance and exertion, is a character I would wish to be thought to possess ; and have always despised the whining yelp of complaint, and the cowardly, feeble resolve.

Poor Miss K[ennedy, sister of Mrs. Gavin Hamilton] is ailing a good deal this winter, and begged me to remember her to you the first time I wrote to you. Surely woman, amiable woman, is often made in vain. Too delicately formed for the rougher pursuits of ambition ; too noble for the dirt of avarice ; and even too gentle for the rage of pleasure ; formed indeed for, and highly susceptible of, enjoyment and rapture ; but that enjoyment, alas ! almost wholly at the mercy of the caprice, malevolence, stupidity, or wickedness of an animal at all times comparatively unfeeling, and often brutal.—R. B.

XCVII.

TO MR. RICHARD BROWN.

GLASGOW, 26th March, 1788.

I AM monstrously to blame, my dear Sir, in not writing to you, and

sending you the Directory. I have been getting my tack extended, as I have taken a farm, and I have been racking shop accounts with Mr. Creech ; both of which, together with watching, fatigue, and a load of care almost too heavy for my shoulders, have in some degree actually fevered me. I really forgot the Directory yesterday, which vexed me ; but I was convulsed with rage a great part of the day.—R. B.

XCVIII.

TO MR. ROBERT CLEGHORN,
EDINBURGH.

MAUCHLINE, 31st March, 1788.

YESTERDAY, my dear Sir, as I was riding through a track of melancholy, joyless muirs, between Galloway and Ayrshire, it being Sunday, I turned my thoughts to psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs ; and your favourite air, "Captain O'Kean," coming at length into my head, I tried these words to it. You will see that the first part of the tune must be repeated.

The small birds rejoice in the green leaves
returning.

The murmuring streamlet winds clear through
the vale ;

The hawthorn trees blow in the dew of the
morning.

And wild scattered cowslips bedeck the green
dale ;

But what can give pleasure, or what can seem
fair,

While the lingering moments are numbered by
Care ?

No flowers gaily springing, nor birds sweetly
singing,

Can soothe the sad bosom of joyless Despair.

I am tolerably pleased with these verses ; but as I have only a sketch of the tune, I leave it with you to try if they suit the measure of the music.

I am so harassed with care and anxiety about this farming project of mine, that my muse has degenerated into the veriest prose-wench

that ever picked cinders or followed a tinker. When I am fairly got into the routine of business, I shall trouble you with a longer epistle; perhaps with some queries respecting farming: at present, the world sits such a load on my mind, that it has effaced almost every trace of the poet in me.

My very best compliments and good wishes to Mrs. Cleghorn.—R. B.

XCIX.

TO

MR. WILLIAM DUNBAR, W.S.,
EDINBURGH.

MAUCHLINE, 7th April, 1788.

I HAVE not delayed so long respecting you, my much respected friend, because I thought no farther of my promise. I have long since given up that kind of formal correspondence, where one sits down irksomely to write a letter, because we think we are in duty bound so to do.

I have been roving over the country, as the farm I have taken is forty miles from this place, hiring servants and preparing matters; but most of all, I am earnestly busy to bring about a revolution in my own mind. As, till within these eighteen months, I never was the wealthy master of ten guineas, my knowledge of business is to learn; add to this, my late scenes of idleness and dissipation have enervated my mind to an alarming degree. Skill in the sober science of life is my most serious and hourly study. I have dropt all conversation and all reading (prose reading) but what tends in some way or other to my serious aim. Except one worthy young fellow, I have not one single correspondent in Edinburgh. You have indeed kindly made me an offer of that kind. The world of wits, and *gens comme il faut* which I lately left, and with whom I never again will

intimately mix—from that port, Sir, I expect your Gazette: what *les beaux esprits* are saying, what they are doing, and what they are singing. Any sober intelligence from my sequestered walks of life; any droll original; any passing remark, important forsooth, because it is mine; any little poetic effort, however embryoth; these, my dear Sir, are all you have to expect from me. When I talk of poetic efforts, I must have it always understood that I appeal from your wit and taste to your friendship and good-nature. The first would be my favourite tribunal, where I defied censure; but the last, where I declined justice.

I have scarcely made a single distich since I saw you. When I meet with an old Scots air that has any facetious idea in its name, I have a peculiar pleasure in following out that idea for a verse or two.

I trust that this will find you in better health than I did last time I called for you. A few lines from you, directed to me at Mauchline, were it but to let me know how you are, will ease my mind a good deal. Now, never shun the idea of writing me, because perhaps you may be out of humour or spirits. I could give you a hundred good consequences attending a dull letter; one, for example, and the remaining ninety-nine some other time—it will always serve to keep in countenance, my much respected Sir,

Your obliged Friend and humble
Servant,

R. B.

C.

TO MISS CHALMERS.

MAUCHLINE, 7th April, 1788.

I AM indebted to you and Miss Nimmo for letting me know Miss Kennedy. Strange, how apt we are to indulge prejudices in our judgments of one another! Even I, who

pique myself on my skill in marking characters—because I am too proud of my character as a man to be dazzled in my judgment for glaring wealth, and too proud of my situation as a poor man to be biassed against squalid poverty. I was unacquainted with Miss K's very uncommon worth.

I am going on a good deal progressive in *mon grand bât*—the sober science of life. I have lately made some sacrifices, for which, were I *vivâ voce* with you to paint the situation and recount the circumstances, you would applaud me.—R. B.

CI.

TO MR. JAMES SMITH,
AVON PRINTFIELD, LINLITHGOW.

MAUCHLINE, April 28, 1788.

BEWARE of your Strassburgh, my good Sir! Look on this as the opening of a correspondence, like the opening of a twenty-four gun battery!

There is no understanding a man properly without knowing something of his previous ideas—that is to say, if the man has any ideas; for I know many who, in the animal muster, pass for men, that are the scanty masters of only one idea on any given subject, and by far the greatest part of your acquaintances and mine can barely boast of ideas, 1725—175—175 (or some such fractional matter); so, to let you a little into the secrets of my pericranium, there is, you must know, a certain cleanlimbed, handsome, bewitching young hussey of your acquaintance, to whom I have lately and privately given a matrimonial title to my corpus.

"Bode a robe and wear it,
Bode a poke and bear it,"

says the wise old Scots adage! I hate to presage ill-luck; and as my girl has been doubly kinder to me

than even the best of women usually are to their partners of our sex, in similar circumstances, I reckon on twelve times a brace of children against I celebrate my twelfth wedding-day. . . .

"Light's heartsome," quo' the wife when she was stealing sheep. You see what a lamp I have hung up to lighten your paths, when you are idle enough to explore the combinations and relations of my ideas. 'Tis now as plain as a pikestaff why a twenty-four gun battery was a metaphor I could readily employ.

Now for business. I intend to present Mrs. Burns with a printed shawl, an article of which I daresay you have variety: 'tis my first present to her since I have irrevocably called her mine; and I have a kind of whimsical wish to get the first said present from an old and much-valued friend of hers and mine—a trusty Trojan, whose friendship I count myself possessed of as a life-rent lease.

Look on this letter as a "beginning of sorrows;" I will write you till your eyes ache reading nonsense.

Mrs. Burns ('tis only her private designation) begs her best compliments to you.—R. B.

CII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

MAUCHLINE, 28th April, 1788.

MADAM,

Your powers of reprehension must be great indeed, as I assure you they made my heart ache with penitential pangs, even though I was really not guilty. As I commence farmer at Whitsunday, you will easily guess I must be pretty busy; but that is not all. As I got the offer of the Excise business without solicitation, and as it costs me only six months' attendance for instructions to entitle me to a commission—

which commission lies by me, and at any future period, on my simple petition, can be resumed—I thought five-and-thirty pounds a year was no bad *dernier ressort* for a poor poet, if Fortune in her jade tricks should kick him down from the little eminence to which she has lately helped him up.

For this reason, I am at present attending these instructions, to have them completed before Whitsunday. Still, Madam, I prepared with the sincerest pleasure to meet you at the Mount, and came to my brother's on Saturday night, to set out on Sunday; but for some nights preceding I had slept in an apartment where the force of the winds and rains was only mitigated by being sifted through numberless apertures in the windows, walls, &c. In consequence I was on Sunday, Monday, and part of Tuesday, unable to stir out of bed, with all the miserable effects of a violent cold.

You see, Madam, the truth of the French maxim, *le vrai n'est pas toujours le vraisemblable*. Your last was so full of expostulation, and was something so like the language of an offended friend, that I began to tremble for a correspondence which I had with grateful pleasure set down as one of the greatest enjoyments of my future life. . . .

Your books have delighted me; Virgil, Dryden, and Tasso, were all equally strangers to me; but of this more at large in my next.

R. B.

CIII.

TO PROFESSOR STEWART.

MAUCHLINE, 3rd May, 1788.

SIR,

I enclose you one or two more of my bagatelles. If the fervent wishes of honest gratitude have any influence with that great unknown Being who frames the

chain of causes and events, prosperity and happiness will attend your visit to the continent, and return you safe to your native shore.

Wherever I am, allow me, Sir, to claim it as my privilege to acquaint you with my progress in my trade of rhymes; as I am sure I could say it with truth, that, next to my little fame, and the having it in my power to make life more comfortable to those whom nature has made dear to me, I shall ever regard your countenance, your patronage, your friendly good offices, as the most valued consequence of my late success in life.

R. B.

CIV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

MAUCHLINE, 4th May, 1788.

MADAM,

Dryden's Virgil has delighted me. I do not know whether the critics will agree with me, but the Georgics are to me by far the best of Virgil. It is indeed a species of writing entirely new to me, and has filled my head with a thousand fancies of emulation: but, alas! when I read the Georgics, and then survey my own powers, 'tis like the idea of a Shetland pony, drawn up by the side of a thorough-bred hunter, to start for the plate. I own I am disappointed in the *Æneid*. Faultless correctness may please, and does highly please, the lettered critic; but to that awful character I have not the most distant pretensions. I do not know whether I do not hazard my pretensions to be a critic of any kind, when I say that I think Virgil, in many instances, a servile copier of Homer. If I had the *Odyssey* by me, I could parallel many passages where Virgil has evidently copied, but by no means improved, Homer. Nor can I think there is anything of this owing to the translators;

for, from everything I have seen of Dryden, I think him, in genius and fluency of language, Pope's master. I have not perused Tasso enough to form an opinion—in some future letter you shall have my ideas of him; though I am conscious my criticisms must be very inaccurate and imperfect, as there I have ever felt and lamented my want of learning most.—R. B.

CV.

TO MR. SAMUEL BROWN,

KIRKOSWALD.

MOSSGIEL, 4th May, 1788.

DEAR UNCLE,

This I hope will find you and your conjugal yoke-fellow in your good old way. I am impatient to know if the Ailsa fowling be commenced for this season yet, as I want three or four stones of feathers, and I hope you will bespeak them for me. It would be a vain attempt for me to enumerate the various transactions I have been engaged in since I saw you last, but this I know, I engaged in a *smuggling trade*, and God knows if ever any poor man experienced better returns—two for one; but as freight and delivery have turned out so dear, I am thinking of taking out a licence and beginning in fair trade. I have taken a farm on the borders of the Nith, and, in imitation of the old patriarchs, get men-servants and maid-servants, and flocks and herds, and beget sons and daughters.

Your obedient Nephew,
R. B.

CVI.

TO MR. JAMES JOHNSON,

ENGRAVER, EDINBURGH.

MAUCHLINE, 25th May, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am really uneasy about that money which Mr. Creech owes me

per note in your hand, and I want it much at present, as I am engaging in business pretty deeply both for myself and my brother. A hundred guineas can be but a trifling affair to him, and 'tis a matter of most serious importance to me. Tomorrow I begin my operations as a farmer, and God speed the plough!

I am so enamoured of a certain girl's prolific, twin-bearing merit, that I have given her a legal title to the best blood in my body, and so farewell rakery! To be serious, I found I had a long and much-loved fellow-creature's happiness or misery in my hands; and though Pride and seeming Justice were murderous King's Advocates on the one side, yet Humanity, Generosity, and Forgiveness, were such powerful, such irresistible Council on the other side, that a jury of all Endearments and new attachments brought in a unanimous verdict of *Not Guilty!* And the Panel, be it known to all whom it concerns, is installed and instated into all the rights, privileges, immunities, franchises, services, and paraphernalia that at present do, or at any time coming may, belong to the name, title, and designation. [MS. torn away here.]

Present my compliments to . . .

R. B.

CVII.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

MAUCHLINE, May 26, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am two kind letters in your debt; but I have been from home, and horribly busy, buying and preparing for my farming business, over and above the plague of my Excise instructions, which this week will finish.

As I flatter my wishes that I foresee many future years' correspondence between us, 'tis foolish to

talk of excusing dull epistles : a dull letter may be a very kind one. I have the pleasure to tell you that I have been extremely fortunate in all my buyings and bargainings hitherto—Mrs Burns not excepted ; which title I now avow to the world. I am truly pleased with this last affair ; it has indeed added to my anxieties for futurity, but it has given a stability to my mind and resolutions unknown before ; and the poor girl has the most sacred enthusiasm of attachment to me, and has not a wish but to gratify my every idea of her deportment. I am interrupted. Farewell, my dear Sir.—R. B.

CVIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

27th May, 1788.

MADAM,

I have been torturing my philosophy to no purpose, to account for that kind partiality of yours, which has followed me, in my return to the shade of life, with assiduous benevolence. Often did I regret, in the fleeting hours of my late will-o'-wisp appearance, that "here I had no continuing city ;" and, but for the consolation of a few solid guineas, could almost lament the time that a momentary acquaintance with wealth and splendour put me so much out of conceit with the sworn companions of my road through life—insignificance and poverty.

There are few circumstances relating to the unequal distribution of the good things of this life that give me more vexation (I mean in what I see around me) than the importance the opulent bestow on their trifling family affairs, compared with the very same things on the contracted scale of a cottage. Last afternoon I had the honour to spend an hour or two at a good woman's fireside, where the planks

that compose the floor were decorated with a splendid carpet, and the gay table sparkled with silver and china. 'Tis now about term-day, and there has been a revolution among those creatures, who, though in appearance partakers, and equally noble partakers, of the same nature with Madam, are from time to time—their nerves, their sinews, their health, strength, wisdom, experience, genius, time, nay a good part of their very thoughts—sold for months and years, not only to the necessities, the conveniences, but the caprices of the important few. We talked of the insignificant creatures ; nay, notwithstanding their general stupidity and rascality, did some of the poor devils the honour to commend them. But light be the turf upon his breast who taught "Reverence thyself." We looked down on the unpolished wretches, their impertinent wives and clouterly brats, as the lordly bull does on the little dirty ant-hill, whose puny inhabitants he crushes in the carelessness of his ramble, or tosses in the air in the wantonness of his pride.—R. B.

CIX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP,

AT MR. DUNLOP'S, HADDINGTON.

ELLISLAND, 14th June, 1788.

"WHERE'ER I roam, whatever realms I see,
My heart, untravell'd, fondly turns to thee.
Still to my friend it turns with ceaseless pain,
And drags, at each remove, a lengthen'd chain."
GOLDSMITH.

This is the second day, my honoured friend, that I have been on my farm. A solitary inmate of an old, smoky spence ; far from every object I love, or by whom I am beloved ; nor any acquaintance older than yesterday, except Jenny Geddes, the old mare I ride on ; while uncouth cares and novel plans hourly insult my awkward ignorance

and bashful inexperience. There is a foggy atmosphere native to my soul in the hour of care, consequently the dreary objects seem larger than the life. Extreme sensibility, irritated and prejudiced on the gloomy side by a series of misfortunes and disappointments, at that period of my existence when the soul is laying in her cargo of ideas for the voyage of life, is, I believe, the principal cause of this unhappy frame of mind.

"The valiant, in himself, what can he suffer?
Or what need he regard his *single* woes?" &c.

Your surmise, Madam, is just; I am indeed a husband. . . .

To jealousy or infidelity I am an equal stranger. My preservative from the first is the most thorough consciousness of her sentiments of honour, and her attachment to me: my antidote against the last is my long and deep-rooted affection for her.

In housewife matters, of aptness to learn and activity to execute she is eminently mistress; and during my absence in Nithsdale, she is regularly and constantly apprentice to my mother and sisters in their dairy and other rural business.

The Muses must not be offended when I tell them the concerns of my wife and family will, in my mind, always take the *pas*; but I assure them their ladyships will ever come next in place.

You are right that a bachelor state would have insured me more friends; but, from a cause you will easily guess, conscious peace, in the enjoyment of my own mind, and unmistrusting confidence in approaching my God, would seldom have been of the number.

I found a once much-loved and still much-loved female, literally and truly cast out to the mercy of the naked elements; but I enabled her to *purchase* a shelter—there is no

sporting with a fellow-creature's happiness or misery.

The most placid good-nature and sweetness of disposition; a warm heart, gratefully devoted with all its powers to love me; vigorous health and sprightly cheerfulness, set off to the best advantage by a more than commonly handsome figure; these, I think, in a woman, may make a good wife, though she should never have read a page but the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, nor have danced in a brighter assembly than a penny pay wedding.—R. B.

CX.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

ELLISLAND, *June 15th, 1788.*

THIS is now the third day, my dearest Sir, that I have sojourned in these regions; and during these three days you have occupied more of my thoughts than in three weeks preceding: in Ayrshire I have several variations of friendship's compass, here it points invariable to the pole. My farm gives me a good many uncouth cares and anxieties, but I hate the language of complaint. Job, or some one of his friends, says well—"Why should a living man complain?"

I have lately been much mortified with contemplating an unlucky imperfection in the very framing and construction of my soul; namely, a blundering inaccuracy of her olfactory organs in hitting the scent of craft or design in my fellow-creatures. I do not mean any compliment to my ingenuousness, or to hint that the defect is in consequence of the unsuspecting simplicity of conscious truth and honour: I take it to be, in some way or other, an imperfection in the mental sight; or, metaphor apart, some modification of dulness. In two or three instances

lately I have been most shamefully out.

I have all along hitherto, in the warfare of life, been bred to arms among the light-horse—the picket-guards of fancy—a kind of hussars and Highlanders of the brain; but I am firmly resolved to sell out of these giddy battalions, who have no ideas of a battle but fighting the foe, or of a siege but storming the town. Cost what it will, I am determined to buy in among the grave squadrons of heavy-armed thought, or the artillery corps of plodding contrivance.

What books are you reading, or what is the subject of your thoughts, besides the great studies of your profession? You said something about religion in your last. I don't exactly remember what it was, as the letter is in Ayrshire: but I thought it not only prettily said, but nobly thought. You will make a noble fellow if once you were married. I make no reservation of your being well married: you have so much sense and knowledge of human nature, that, though you may not realize perhaps the ideas of romance, yet you will never be ill married.

Were it not for the terrors of my ticklish situation respecting provision for a family of children, I am decidedly of opinion that the step I have taken is vastly for my happiness. As it is, I look to the Excise scheme as a certainty of maintenance. A maintenance!—luxury, to what either Mrs. Burns or I was born to. Adieu!—R. B.

CXI.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

ELLISLAND, 30th June, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I just now received your brief epistle; and, to take vengeance on your laziness, I have, you see, taken

a long sheet of writing-paper, and have begun at the top of the page, intending to scribble on to the very last corner.

I am vexed at that affair of the * * *, but dare not enlarge on the subject until you send me your direction, as I suppose that will be altered on your late master and friend's death [Mr. Samuel Mitchellson, W.S.] I am concerned for the old fellow's exit only as I fear it may be to your disadvantage in any respect; for an old man's dying, except he have been a very benevolent character, or in some particular situation of life that the welfare of the poor or the helpless depended on him, I think it an event of the most trifling moment to the world. Man is naturally a kind, benevolent animal, but he is dropped into such a needy situation here in this vexatious world, and has such a whoreson, hungry, growling, multiplying pack of necessities, appetites, passions, and desires about him, ready to devour him for want of other food, that in fact he must lay aside his cares for others that he may look properly to himself.

I desired the carrier to pay you; but as I mentioned only fifteen shillings to him, I will rather enclose you a guinea-note. I have it not, indeed, to spare here, as I am only a sojourner in a strange land in this place; but in a day or two I return to Mauchline, and there I have the bank-notes through the house like salt-permits.

There is a great degree of folly in talking unnecessarily of one's private affairs. I have just now been interrupted by one of my new neighbours, who has made himself absolutely contemptible in my eyes by his silly garrulous pruriency. I know it has been a fault of my own too; but from this moment I abjure it as I would the service of hell! Your poets, spendthrifts, and other

fools of that kidney, pretend, forsooth, to crack their jokes on prudence; but 'tis a squalid vagabond glorying in his rags. Still, imprudence respecting money matters is much more pardonable than imprudence respecting character. I have no objection to prefer prodigality to avarice in some few instances; but I appeal to your observation if you have not met, and often met, with the same disingenuousness, the same hollow-hearted insincerity and disintegrative depravity of principle, in the hackneyed victims of profusion as in the unfeeling children of parsimony. I have every possible reverence for the much-talked-of world beyond the grave, and I wish that which piety believes and virtue deserves may be all matter of fact. But in things belonging to and terminating in this present scene of existence man has serious and interesting business on hand. Whether a man shall shake hands with welcome in the distinguished elevation of respect, or shrink from contempt in the abject corner of insignificance; whether he shall wanton under the tropic of plenty—at least enjoy himself in the comfortable latitudes of easy convenience—or starve in the arctic circle of dreary poverty; whether he shall rise in a manly consciousness of a self-approving mind, or sink beneath a galling load of regret and remorse—these are alternatives of the last moment.

You see how I preach. You used occasionally to sermonize too; I wish you would in charity favour me with a sheet full in your own way. I admire the close of a letter Lord Bolingbroke writes to Dean Swift:—"Adieu, dear Swift! with all thy faults I love thee entirely; make an effort to love me with all mine!" Humble servant, and all that trumpery, is now such a prostituted business, that honest

friendship, in her sincere way, must have recourse to her primitive, simple, Farewell!—R. B.

CXII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

MAUCHLINE, 10th July, 1788.

MY MUCH HONOURED FRIEND,

Yours of the 24th June is before me. I found it, as well as another valued friend—my wife—waiting to welcome me to Ayrshire; I met both with the sincerest pleasure.

When I write you, Madam, I do not sit down to answer every paragraph of yours, by echoing every sentiment, like the faithful Commons of Great Britain in Parliament assembled answering a speech from the best of kings. I express myself in the fulness of my heart, and may perhaps be guilty of neglecting some of your kind inquiries; but not from your very odd reason, that I do not read your letters. All your epistles for several months have cost me nothing except a swelling throb of gratitude or a deep-felt sentiment of veneration.

Mrs. Burns, Madam, is the identical woman * * *. When she first found herself "as women wish to be who love their lords," as I loved her nearly to distraction, we took steps for a private marriage. Her parents got the hint; and not only forbade me her company and their house, but, on my rumoured West Indian voyage, got a warrant to put me in jail till I should find security in my about-to-be paternal relation. You know my lucky reverse of fortune. On my *éclatant* return to Mauchline I was made very welcome to visit my girl. The usual consequences began to betray her; and as I was at that time laid up a cripple in Edinburgh, she was turned, literally turned, out of doors, and I wrote to a friend to shelter

her till my return, when our marriage was declared. Her happiness or misery was in my hands, and who could trifle with such a deposit? To jealousy or infidelity I am an equal stranger. My preservative against the first, is the most thorough consciousness of her sentiments of honour, and her attachment to me: my antidote against the last, is my long and deep-rooted affection for her.

I can easily *fancy* a more agreeable companion for my journey of life; but, upon my honour, I have never *seen* the individual instance. . . .

Circumstanced as I am, I could never have got a female partner for life who could have entered into my favourite studies, relished my favourite authors, &c. without probably entailing on me, at the same time, expensive living, fantastic caprice, perhaps apish affectation, with all the other blessed boarding-school acquirements, which (*pardonnez moi, madame*) are sometimes to be found among females of the upper ranks, but almost universally pervade the misses of the would-be gentry.

I like your way in your churchyard lucubrations. Thoughts that are the spontaneous result of accidental situations, either respecting health, place, or company, have often a strength, and always an originality, that would in vain be looked for in fancied circumstances and studied paragraphs. For me, I have often thought of keeping a letter in progression by me, to send you when the sheet was written out. Now I talk of sheets, I must tell you my reason for writing to you on paper of this kind is my pruriency of writing to you at large. A page of post is on such a dissocial, narrow-minded scale, that I cannot abide it; and double letters, at least in my miscellaneous reverie manner, are a monstrous tax in a close correspondence.—R. B.

CXIII.

TO MR. PETER HILL,
BOOKSELLER, EDINBURGH.

MAUCHLINE, 18th July, 1788.

You injured me, my dear Sir, in your construction of the cause of my silence. From Ellisland in Nithsdale to Mauchline in Kyle is forty and five miles. *There* a house a-building, and farm enclosures and improvements to tend; *here* a new—not indeed so much a *new* as a *young* wife: good God, Sir, could my dearest brother expect a regular correspondence from me! I am busied with the sacred pen of Nature, in the mystic volume of Creation—can I dishonour my hand with a dirty goose-feather, on a parcel of mashed old rags. . . . I am certain that my liberal-minded and much-respected friend would have acquitted me, though I had obeyed to the very letter that famous statute among the irrevocable decrees of the Medes and Persians, not to ask petition, for forty days, of either God or man, save thee, O Queen, only!

I am highly obliged to you, my dearest Sir, for your kind, your elegant, compliments on my becoming one of that most respectable, that truly venerable corps, they who are, without a metaphor, the fathers of posterity. . . .

Your book came safe, and I am going to trouble you with further commissions. I call it troubling you—because I want only *books*: the cheapest way the best; so you may have to hunt for them in the evening auctions. I want Smollett's works, for the sake of his incomparable humour. I have already "Roderick Random" and "Humphrey Clinker;" "Peregrine Pickle," "Launcelot Greaves," and "Ferdinand Count Fathom," I still want; but, as I said, the veriest ordinary copies will serve me, I

am nice only in the appearance of my poets. I forget the price of "Cowper's Poems," but I believe I must have them. I saw the other day proposals for a publication entitled "Banks's New and Complete Christian's Family Bible," printed for C. Cooke, Paternoster Row, London. He promises at least to give in the work, I think it is, three hundred and odd engravings, to which he has put the names of the first artists in London. You will know the character of the performance, as some numbers of it are published; and if it is really what it pretends to be, set me down as a subscriber, and send me the published numbers.

Let me hear from you your first leisure minute, and trust me you shall in future have no reason to complain of my silence. The dazzling perplexity of novelty will dissipate, and leave me to pursue my course in the quiet path of methodical routine.—R. B.

CXIV.

TO MR. GEORGE LOCKHART,
MERCHANT, GLASGOW.

MAUCHLINE, 18th July, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am just going for Nithsdale, else I would certainly have transcribed some of my rhyming things for you. The Miss Bailies I have seen in Edinburgh. "Fair and lovely are thy works, Lord God Almighty! Who would not praise Thee for these Thy gifts in Thy goodness to the sons of men!!!" It needed not your fine taste to admire them. I declare, one day I had the honour of dining at Mr. Bailie's, I was almost in the predicament of the children of Israel, when they could not look

on Moses' face for the glory that shone in it when he descended from Mount Horeb.

I did once write a poetic address from the Falls of Bruar to his Grace of Athole when I was in the Highlands. When you return to Scotland let me know, and I will send such of my pieces as please myself best. I return to Mauchline in about ten days.

My compliments to Mr. Purden.

I am in truth,
but at present in haste, yours,
R. B.

CXV.

TO
MR. ALEX. CUNNINGHAM,
WRITER, EDINBURGH.

ELLISLAND, NITHSDALE,
July 27th, 1788.

MY GODLIKE FRIEND,—

Nay, do not stare,
You think I am a bit of a like:
But "God is Love" he says in Scripture—
Then, surely thou art god-like:
&c., &c.

My spur-galled, spavined Pegasus makes so hobbling a progress over the course of Extempore, that I must here alight and try the foot-path of plain prose. I have not met with anything this long while, my dear Sir, that has given my inward man such a fillip as your kind epistle.

For my own Biographical story, I can only say with the venerable Hebrew Patriarch—"Here am I with the children God has given me!" I have been a farmer since Whitsunday, and am just now building a house—not a Palace to attract the train-attended steps of pride-swollen Greatness, but a plain, simple domicile for Humility and Contentment. I am too a married man. This was a step of which I had no idea when you and

I were together. On my return to Ayrshire, I found a much-loved female's positive happiness, or absolute misery among my hands, and I could not trifle with such a sacred deposit. I am, since, doubly pleased with my conduct. I have the consciousness of acting up to that generosity of principle which I would be thought to possess, and I am really more and more pleased with my choice. When I tell you that Mrs. Burns was once "my Jean," you will know the rest. Of four children she bore me in seventeen months, my eldest boy is only living. By the bye, I intend breeding him up for the Church; and from an innate dexterity in secret mischief which he possesses, and a certain hypocritical gravity as he looks on the consequences, I have no small hopes of him in the sacerdotal line.

Mrs. Burns does not come from Ayrshire till my said new house be ready, so I am eight or ten days at Mauchline and this place alternately. Hitherto my direction was only "at Mauchline," but "at Ellisland near Dumfries," will now likewise find me; though I prefer the former. I need not tell you that I shall expect to hear from you soon.

Adieu! ROBT. BURNS.

Lowe's poem I shall transcribe in my first leisure hour.

R. B.

CXVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

MAUCHLINE, August 2, 1788.

HONOURED MADAM,

Your kind letter welcomed me yesternight to Ayrshire. I am indeed seriously angry with you at the quantum of your luckpenny; but vexed and hurt as I was, I could not help laughing very heartily at the

noble lord's apology for the missed napkin.

I would write to you from Nithsdale, and give you my direction there, but I have scarce an opportunity of calling at a post-office once in a fortnight. I am six miles from Dumfries, am scarcely ever in it myself, and as yet have little acquaintance in the neighbourhood. Besides, I am now very busy on my farm, building a dwelling-house; as at present I am almost an evangelical man in Nithsdale, for I have scarce "where to lay my head."

There are some passages in your last that brought tears in my eyes. "The heart knoweth its own sorrows, and a stranger intermeddeth not therewith." The repository of these "sorrows of the heart" is a kind of *sanctum sanctorum*; and 'tis only a chosen friend, and that, too, at particular sacred times, who dares enter into them:

"Heaven oft tears the bosom-chords
That nature finest strung."

You will excuse this quotation for the sake of the author. Instead of entering on this subject farther, I shall transcribe you a few lines I wrote in a hermitage belonging to a gentleman in my Nithsdale neighbourhood. They are almost the only favours the Muses have conferred on me in that country. [Here follow the verses composed in the Friars' Carse Hermitage.]

Since I am in the way of transcribing, the following were the production of yesterday, as I jogged through the wild hills of New Cummock. I intend inserting them, or something like them, in an epistle I am going to write to the gentleman on whose friendship my Excise hopes depend—Mr. Graham of Fintry, one of the worthiest and most accomplished gentlemen not only of this country, but, I will dare to say it, of this age. The following are just the first crude

thoughts "unhousel'd, unanointed,
unaneal'd :"—

Pity the tuneful Muses' helpless train ;
Weak, timid landmen on life's stormy main :
The world were blest, did bliss on them depend ;
Ah, that "the friendly e'er should want a friend !"
The little fate bestows they share as soon ;
Unlike sage, proverb'd wisdom's hard-wrung
boon.

Let Prudence number o'er each sturdy son
Who life and wisdom at one race begun,
Who feel by reason and who give by rule ;
Instinct's a brute and sentiment a fool !
Who make poor *will* do wait upon *I should* ;
We own they're prudent, but who owns they're
good ?

Ye wise ones, hence ! ye hurt the social eye ;
God's image rudely etched on base alloy !
But come * * *

Here the Muse left me. I am
astonished at what you tell me of
Anthony's writing me. I never
received it. Poor fellow ! you vex
me much by telling me that he is
unfortunate. I shall be in Ayrshire
ten days from this date. I have just
room for an old Roman farewell.

R. B.

CXVII.

TO THE SAME.

ELLISLAND, 16th August, 1788.

I AM in a fine disposition, my
honoured friend, to send you an
elegiac epistle, and want only genius
to make it quite Shenstonian :—

"Why droops my heart, with fancied woes
forlorn ?

Why sinks my soul beneath each wintry sky ?"

My increasing cares in this as yet
strange country—gloomy conjectures
in the dark vista of futurity—con-
sciousness of my own inability for
the struggle of the world—my
broadened mark to misfortune in a
wife and children—I could indulge
these reflections till my humour
should ferment into the most acid
chagrin, that would corrode the very
thread of life.

To counterwork these baneful
feelings I have sat down to write
to you ; as I declare upon my soul
I always find that the most sovereign
balm for my wounded spirit,

I was yesterday at Mr. Miller's
[of Dalswinton] to dinner, for the
first time. My reception was quite
to my mind ; from the lady of the
house quite flattering. She some-
times hits on a couplet or two
impromptu. She repeated one or
two, to the admiration of all present.
My suffrage as a professional man
was expected : I for once went
agonizing over the belly of my con-
science. Pardon me, ye, my adored
household gods, independence of
spirit and integrity of soul ! In the
course of conversation "Johnson's
Musical Museum," a collection of
Scottish songs with the music, was
talked of. We got a song on the
harpsichord, beginning—

"Raving winds around her blowing."

The air was much admired : the lady
of the house asked me whose were
the words. "Mine, Madam ; they
are indeed my very best verses : " she
took not the smallest notice of them !
The old Scottish proverb says well,
"King's caff is better than ither
folks' corn." I was going to make
a New Testament quotation about
"casting pearls," but that would be
too virulent, for the lady is actually
a woman of sense and taste. . . .

After all that has been said on the
other side of the question, man is by
no means a happy creature. I do
not speak of the selected few,
favoured by partial Heaven, whose
souls are tuned to gladness amid
riches, and honours, and prudence,
and wisdom. I speak of the
neglected many, whose nerves,
whose sinews, whose days, are sold
to the minions of fortune.

If I thought you had never seen it,
I would transcribe for you a stanza
of an old Scottish ballad, called
"The Life and Age of Man,"
beginning thus :—

"'Twas in the sixteen hundredth year
Of God and fifty-three
Frae Christ was born, that bough't us dear,
As writings testifie,"

I had an old grand-uncle, with whom my mother lived a while in her girlish years: the good old man, for such he was, was long blind ere he died, during which time his highest enjoyment was to sit down and cry, while my mother would sing the simple old song of "The Life and Age of Man."

It is this way of thinking, it is these melancholy truths, that make religion so precious to the poor miserable children of men. If it is a mere phantom, existing only in the heated imagination of enthusiasm,

"What truth on earth so precious as the lie?"

My idle reasonings sometimes make me a little sceptical, but the necessities of my heart always give the cold philosophizings the lie. Who looks for the heart weaned from earth; the soul affianced to her God; the correspondence fixed with heaven; the pious supplication and devout thanksgiving, constant as the vicissitudes of even and morn; who thinks to meet with these in the court, the palace, in the glare of public life? No: to find them in their precious importance and divine efficacy, we must search among the obscure recesses of disappointment, affliction, poverty, and distress.

I am sure, dear Madam, you are now more than pleased with the length of my letters. I return to Ayrshire middle of next week: and it quickens my pace to think that there will be a letter from you waiting me there. I must be here again very soon for my harvest.—R. B.

CXVIII.

TO MR. JOHN BEUGO,

ENGRAVER, EDINBURGH.

ELLISLAND, 9th Sept. 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

There is not in Edinburgh above the number of the Graces

whose letters would have given me so much pleasure as yours of the 3d instant, which only reached me yesternight.

I am here on my farm, busy with my harvest; but for all that most pleasurable part of life called social communication, I am here at the very elbow of existence. The only things that are to be found in this country, in any degree of perfection, are stupidity and canting. Prose they only know in graces, prayers, &c. and the value of these they estimate, as they do their plaiding webs, by the ell. As for the Muses, they have as much an idea of a rhinoceros as of a poet. For my old capricious but good-natured hussy of a Muse—

"By banks of Nith I sat and wept
When Celia I thought on;
In midst thereof I hang my harp
The willow trees upon."

I am generally about half my time in Ayrshire with my "darling Jean;" and then I, at lucid intervals, throw my horny fist across my becobwebbed lyre, much in the same manner as an old wife throws her hand across the spokes of her spinning-wheel.

I will send you the "Fortunate Shepherdess" as soon as I return to Ayrshire, for there I keep it with other precious treasure. I shall send it by a careful hand, as I would not for anything it should be mislaid or lost. I do not wish to serve you from any benevolence, or other grave Christian virtue; 'tis purely a selfish gratification of my own feelings whenever I think of you.

You do not tell me if you are going to be married. Depend upon it, if you do not make some foolish choice, it will be a very great improvement on the dish of life. I can speak from experience, though, God knows, my choice was as random as blind-man's buff. . . .

If your better functions would give you leisure to write me, I should

be extremely happy; that is to say, if you neither keep nor look for a regular correspondence. I hate the idea of being obliged to write a letter. I sometimes write a friend twice a week, at other times once a quarter.

I am exceedingly pleased with your fancy in making the author you mention place a map of Iceland instead of his portrait before his works; 'twas a glorious idea.

Could you conveniently do one thing?—whenever you finish any head, I should like to have a proof-copy of it. I might tell you a long story about your fine genius; but as what everybody knows cannot have escaped you, I shall not say one syllable about it.

If you see Mr. Nasmyth, remember me to him most respectfully, as he both loves and deserves respect; though, if he would pay less respect to the mere carcass of greatness, I should think him much nearer perfection. R. B.

CXIX.

TO MISS CHALMERS,
EDINBURGH.

ELLISLAND, NEAR DUMFRIES,
Sept. 16, 1788.

WHERE are you? and how are you? and is Lady Mackenzie recovering her health?—for I have had but one solitary letter from you. I will not think you have forgot me, Madam; and for my part—

“When thee, Jerusalem, I forget,
Skill part from my right hand!”

“My heart is not of that rock, nor my soul careless as that sea.” I do not make my progress among mankind as a bowl does among its fellows—rolling through the crowd without bearing away any mark or impression, except where they hit in hostile collision.

I am here, driven in with my harvest-folks by bad weather; and as you and your sister once did me the honour of interesting yourselves much *à l'égard de moi*, I sit down to beg the continuation of your goodness. I can truly say that, all the exterior of life apart, I never saw two whose esteem flattered the nobler feelings of my soul—I will not say more, but so much, as Lady Mackenzie and Miss Chalmers. When I think of you—hearts the best, minds the noblest, of human kind—unfortunate even in the shades of life—when I think I have met with you, and have lived more of real life with you in eight days than I can do with almost anybody I meet with in eight years—when I think on the improbability of meeting you in this world again—I could sit down and cry like a child! If ever you honoured me with a place in your esteem, I trust I can now plead more desert. I am secure against that crushing grip of iron poverty, which, alas! is less or more fatal to the native worth and purity of, I fear, the noblest souls; and a late important step in my life has kindly taken me out of the way of those ungrateful iniquities, which, however overlooked in fashionable licence or varnished in fashionable phase, are indeed but lighter and deeper shades of villainy.

Shortly after my last return to Ayrshire I married “my Jean.” This was not in consequence of the attachment of romance, perhaps; but I had a long and much-loved fellow-creature’s happiness or misery in my determination, and I durst not trifle with so important a deposit. Nor have I any cause to repent it. If I have not got polite tattle, modish manners, and fashionable dress, I am not sickened and disgusted with the multiform curse of boarding-school affectation; and I have got the handsomest figure, the sweetest temper,

the soundest constitution, and the kindest heart in the county. Mrs. Burns believes, as firmly as her creed, that I am *le plus bel esprit et le plus honnête homme* in the universe, although she scarcely ever in her life, except the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament and the Psalms of David in metre, spent five minutes together on either prose or verse. I must except also from this last a certain late publication of Scots poems, which she has perused very devoutly, and all the ballads in the country, as she has ("Oh, the partial lover!" you will cry) the finest "wood-note wild" I ever heard. I am the more particular in this lady's character, as I know she will henceforth have the honour of a share in your best wishes. She is still at Mauchline, as I am building my house; for this hovel that I shelter in, while occasionally here, is pervious to every blast that blows and every shower that falls; and I am only preserved from being chilled to death by being suffocated with smoke. I do not find my farm that pennyworth I was taught to expect; but I believe in time it may be a saving bargain. You will be pleased to hear that I have laid aside idle *éclat*, and bind every day after my reapers.

To save me from that horrid situation of at any time going down, in a losing bargain of a farm, to misery, I have taken my Excise instructions, and have my commission in my pocket for any emergency of fortune. If I could set all before your view, whatever disrespect you, in common with the world, have for this business, I know you would approve of my idea.

I will make no apology, dear Madam, for this egotistic detail; I know you and your sister will be interested in every circumstance of it. What signify the silly, idle gewgaws of wealth, or the ideal trumpery of greatness! When fellow-partakers

of the same nature fear the same God, have the same benevolence of heart, the same nobleness of soul, the same detestation at everything dishonest, and the same scorn at everything unworthy—if they are not in the dependence of absolute beggary, in the name of common sense, are they not equals? And if the bias, the instinctive bias, of their soul run the same way, why may they not be friends?

When I may have an opportunity of sending this Heaven only knows. Shenstone says: "When one is confined idle within doors by bad weather, the best antidote against *ennui* is to read the letters of or write to one's friends:" in that case, then, if the weather continues thus, I may scrawl you half a quire.

I very lately—namely, since harvest began—wrote a poem, not in imitation, but in the manner, of Pope's "Moral Epistles." It is only a short essay, just to try the strength of my Muse's pinion in that way. I will send you a copy of it when once I have heard from you. I have likewise been laying the foundation of some pretty large poetic works: how the superstructure will come on I leave to that great maker and marrer of projects—time. Johnson's collection of Scots songs is going on in the third volume; and, of consequence, finds me a consumpt for a great deal of idle metre. One of the most tolerable thing I have done in that way is two stanzas I made to an air a musical gentleman of my acquaintance [Captain Riddell of Glenriddell] composed for the anniversary of his wedding-day, which happens on the 7th of November. Take it as follows:—

[He quotes "The day returns, my bosom burns."]

I shall give over this letter for shame. If I should be seized with a scribbling fit before this goes away, I shall make it another letter; and

then you may allow your patience a week's respite between the two. I have not room for more than the old, kind, hearty Farewell!

To make some amends, *mes chères mesdames*, for dragging you on to this second sheet, and to relieve a little the tiresomeness of my unstudied and uncorrectible prose, I shall transcribe you some of my late poetic bagatelles; though I have, these eight or ten months, done very little that way. One day, in a hermitage on the banks of the Nith, belonging to a gentleman in my neighbourhood, who is so good as give me a key at pleasure, I wrote as follows, supposing myself the sequestered, venerable inhabitant of the lonely mansion.

"Thou whom chance may hither lead, &c."

R. B.

CXX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP,
OF DUNLOP.

MAUCHLINE, 27th Sept. 1788.

I HAVE received twins, dear Madam, more than once, but scarcely ever with more pleasure than when I received yours of the 12th instant. To make myself understood: I had wrote to Mr. Graham, enclosing my poem addressed to him, and the same post which favoured me with yours brought me an answer from him. It was dated the very day he had received mine; and I am quite at a loss to say whether it was most polite or kind.

Your criticisms, my honoured benefactress, are truly the work of a friend. They are not the blasting depredations of a canker-toothed, caterpillar critic; nor are they the fair statement of cold impartiality, balancing with unfeeling exactitude the *pro* and *con* of an author's

merits: they are the judicious observations of animated friendship, selecting the beauties of the piece. I am just arrived from Nithsdale, and will be here a fortnight. I was on horseback this morning by three o'clock; for between my wife and my farm is just forty-six miles. As I jogged on in the dark, I was taken with a poetic fit as follows:—[Here is transcribed Mrs. Fergusson of Craigdarroch's lamentation for the death of her son—an uncommonly promising youth of eighteen or nineteen years of age.]

You will not send me your poetic rambles, but you see I am no niggard of mine. I am sure your impromptus give me double pleasure: what falls from your pen can be neither unentertaining in itself nor indifferent to me. The one fault you found is just; but I cannot please myself in an emendation.

What a life of solicitude is the life of a parent! you interested me much in your young couple. I suppose it is not any of the young ladies I have seen. . . .

R. B.

CXXI.

TO MR. PETER HILL.

MAUCHLINE, 1st October, 1788.

I HAVE been here in this country about three days, and all that time my chief reading has been the "Address to Lochlomond" [by the Rev. Dr. Crie] you were so obliging as to send to me. Were I empannelled one of the author's jury, to determinate his criminality respecting the sin of poesy, my verdict should be "Guilty!" A poet of Nature's making! It is an excellent method for improvement, and what I believe every poet does, to place some favourite classic author, in his own walks of study and composition, before him as a

model. Though your author had not mentioned the name, I could have, at half a glance, guessed his model to be Thomson. Will my brother poet forgive me if I venture to hint that his imitation of that immortal bard is in two or three places rather more servile than such a genius as his required?—*e g.*

"To soothe the maddening passions all to peace."

Address.

"To soothe the throbbing passions into peace"

THOMSON.

I think the "Address" is in simplicity, harmony, and elegance of versification, fully equal to the "Seasons." Like Thomson, too, he has looked into nature for himself: you meet with no copied description. One particular criticism I made at first reading: in no one instance has he said too much. He never flags in his progress, but, like a true poet of Nature's making, kindles in his course. His beginning is simple and modest, as if distrustful of the strength of his pinion; only I do not altogether like—

—————"Truth,

The soul of every song that's nobly great."

Fiction is the soul of many a song that is nobly great. Perhaps I am wrong: this may be but a prose criticism. Is not the phrase in line 7, page 6, "Great lake," too much vulgarized by every-day language for so sublime a poem?

"Great mass of waters, theme for nobler song," is perhaps no emendation. His enumeration of a comparison with other lakes is at once harmonious and poetic. Every reader's ideas must sweep the

"Winding margin of a hundred miles."

The perspective that follows, mountains blue—the imprisoned billows beating in vain—the wooded isles—the digression on the yew-tree—"Ben Lomond's lofty, cloud-enveloped head," &c. are beautiful. A thunder-storm is a subject which has been often tried, yet our poet in

his grand picture has interjected a circumstance, so far as I know, entirely original:—

—————"The gloom
Deep seam'd with frequent streaks of moving
fire"

In his preface to the storm, "the glens how dark between," is noble Highland landscape! The "rain ploughing the red mould," too, is beautifully fancied. "Ben Lomond's lofty, pathless top," is a good expression; and the surrounding view from it is truly great: the

—————"silver mist,
Beneath the beaming sun,"

is well described; and here he has contrived to enliven his poem with a little of that passion which bids fair, I think, to usurp the modern Muses altogether. I know not how far this episode is a beauty upon the whole, but the swain's wish to carry "some faint idea of the vision bright," to entertain her "partial listening ear," is a pretty thought. But in my opinion the most beautiful passages in the whole poem are the fowls crowding, in wintry frosts, to Loch Lomond's "hospitable flood," their wheeling round, their lighting, mixing, diving, &c. and the glorious description of the sportsman. This last is equal to anything in the "Seasons." The idea of "the floating tribes far distant seen, all glistening to the moon," provoking his eye as he is obliged to leave them, is a noble ray of poetic genius. "The howling winds," the "hideous roar" of "the white cascades," are all in the same style.

I forget that while I am thus holding forth with the heedless warmth of an enthusiast, I am perhaps tiring you with nonsense. I must, however, mention that the last verse of the sixteenth page is one of the most elegant compliments I have ever seen. I must likewise notice that beautiful paragraph beginning "The gleaming lake," &c.

I dare not go into the particular beauties of the last two paragraphs, but they are admirably fine, and truly Ossianic.

I must beg your pardon for this lengthened scrawl, I had no idea of it when I began. I should like to know who the author is: but whoever he be, please present him with my grateful thanks for the entertainment he has afforded me.

A friend of mine desired me to commission for him two books—"Letters on the Religion Essential to Man," a book you sent me before; and "The World Unmasked, or the Philosopher the Greatest Cheat." Send me them by the first opportunity. The Bible you sent me is truly elegant; I only wish it had been in two volumes.—R. B.

CXXII.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "STAR."

November 8, 1788.

SIR,

Notwithstanding the opprobrious epithets with which some of our philosophers and gloomy sectarians have branded our nature—the principle of universal selfishness, the proneness to all evil, they have given us—still, the detestation in which inhumanity to the distressed and insolence to the fallen are held by all mankind shows that they are not natives of the human heart. Even the unhappy partner of our kind who is undone—the bitter consequence of his follies or his crimes—who but sympathises with the miseries of this ruined profligate brother? We forget the injuries, and feel for the man.

I went, last Wednesday, to my parish church, most cordially to join in grateful acknowledgment to the Author of all good for the

consequent blessings of the glorious Revolution. To that auspicious event we owe no less than our liberties, civil and religious: to it we are likewise indebted for the present royal family, the ruling features of whose administration have ever been mildness to the subject and tenderness of his rights.

Bred and educated in Revolution principles, the principles of reason and common sense, it could not be any silly political prejudice which made my heart revolt at the harsh, abusive manner in which the reverend gentleman mentioned the House of Stuart, and which, I am afraid, was too much the language of the day. We may rejoice sufficiently in our deliverance from past evils without cruelly raking up the ashes of those whose misfortune it was, perhaps as much as their crime, to be the authors of those evils; and we may bless God for all His goodness to us as a nation, without at the same time cursing a few ruined, powerless exiles, who only harboured ideas and made attempts that most of us would have done had we been in their situation.

"The bloody and tyrannical House of Stuart" may be said with propriety and justice, when compared with the present royal family and the sentiments of our day; but is there no allowance to be made for the manners of the times? Were the royal contemporaries of the Stuarts more attentive to their subjects' rights? Might not the epithets of "bloody and tyrannical" be, with at least equal justice, applied to the House of Tudor, of York, or any other of their predecessors.

The simple state of the case, Sir, seems to be this:—At that period the science of government, the knowledge of the true relation between king and subject, was,

like other sciences and other knowledge, just in its infancy, emerging from dark ages of ignorance and barbarity.

The Stuarts only contended for prerogatives which they knew their predecessors enjoyed, and which they saw their contemporaries enjoying: but these prerogatives were inimical to the liberties of a nation and the rights of subjects.

In this contest between prince and people—the consequence of that light of science which had lately dawned over Europe—the monarch of France, for example, was victorious over the struggling liberties of his people: with us, luckily, the monarch failed, and his unwarrantable pretensions fell a sacrifice to our rights and happiness. Whether it was owing to the wisdom of leading individuals, or to the justling of parties, I cannot pretend to determine; but, likewise, happily for us, the kingly power was shifted into another branch of the family, who, as they owed the throne solely to the call of a free people, could claim nothing inconsistent with the covenanted terms which placed them there.

The Stuarts have been condemned and laughed at for the folly and impracticability of their attempts in 1715 and 1745. That they failed, I bless God, but cannot join in the ridicule against them. Who does not know that the abilities or defects of leaders and commanders are often hidden until put to the touchstone of exigency, and that there is a caprice of fortune, an omnipotence in particular accidents and conjunctures of circumstances which exalt us as heroes or brand us as madmen, just as they are for or against us?

Man, Mr. Publisher, is a strange, weak, inconsistent being: who would believe, Sir, that in this our Augustan age of liberality and refinement, while we seem so justly sensible and jealous of our rights and

liberties, and animated with such indignation against the very memory of those who would have subverted them, that a certain people under our national protection should complain, not against our monarch and a few favourite advisers, but against our whole legislative body, for similar oppression, and almost in the very same terms, as our forefathers did of the House of Stuart? I will not, I cannot, enter into the merits of the case; but I daresay the American Congress in 1776 will be allowed to be as able and as enlightened as the English Convention was in 1688, and that their posterity will celebrate the centenary of their deliverance from us as duly and sincerely as we do ours from the oppressive measures of the wrong-headed House of Stuart.

To conclude, Sir: let every man who has a tear for the many miseries incident to humanity feel for a family illustrious as any in Europe, and unfortunate beyond historic precedent; and let every Briton (and particularly every Scotsman) who ever looked with reverential pity on the dotage of a parent cast a veil over the fatal mistakes of the kings of his forefathers.—R. B.

CXXIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

AT MOREHAM MAINS.

MAUCHLINE, 13th November, 1788.

MADAM,

I had the very great pleasure of dining at Dunlop yesterday. Men are said to flatter women because they are weak: if it be so, poets must be weaker still; for Misses R. and K. and Miss G. M'K. with their flattering attentions and artful compliments absolutely turned my head. I own that they did not lard me over as many a poet does his

patron . . . but they so intoxicated me with their sly insinuations and delicate innuendoes of compliment, that if it had not been for a lucky recollection how much additional weight and lustre your good opinion and friendship must give me in that circle, I had certainly looked upon myself as a person of no small consequence. I dare not say one word how much I was charmed with the Major's friendly welcome, elegant manner, and acute remark, lest I should be thought to balance my orientalisms of applause over against the finest quoy in Ayrshire, which he made me a present of to help and adorn my farm-stock. As it was on Hallow-day, I am determined annually, as that day returns, to decorate her horns with an ode of gratitude to the family of Dunlop. . . .

So soon as I know of your arrival at Dunlop, I will take the first convenience to dedicate a day, or perhaps two, to you and friendship, under the guarantee of the Major's hospitality. There will soon be threescore and ten miles of permanent distance between us; and now that your friendship and friendly correspondence is entwisted with the heart-strings of my enjoyment of life, I must indulge myself in a happy day of "the feast of reason and the flow of soul."—R. B.

CXXIV.

TO MR. JAMES JOHNSON,
ENGRAVER.

MAUCHLINE, *November 15, 1788.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I have sent you two more songs. If you have got any tunes, or anything to correct, please send them by return of the carrier.

I can easily see, my dear friend, that you will very probably have four

volumes. Perhaps you may not find your account lucratively in this business; but you are a patriot for the music of your country, and I am certain posterity will look on themselves as highly indebted to your public spirit. Be not in a hurry; let us go on correctly, and your name shall be immortal.

I am preparing a flaming preface for your third volume. I see every day new musical publications advertised; but what are they? Gaudy, painted butterflies of a day, and then vanish for ever: but your work will outlive the momentary neglects of idle fashion, and defy the teeth of time.

Have you never a fair goddess that leads you a wild goose chase of amorous devotion? Let me know a few of her qualities, such as whether she be rather black or fair, plump or thin, short or tall, &c., and choose your air, and I shall task my muse to celebrate her.—R. B.

CXXV.

TO DR. BLACKLOCK.

MAUCHLINE, *November 15, 1788.*

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

As I hear nothing of your motions, but that you are or were out of town, I do not know where this may find you, or whether it will find you at all. I wrote you a long letter, dated from the land of matrimony, in June; but either it had not found you, or, what I dread more, it found you or Mrs. Blacklock in too precarious a state of health and spirits to take notice of an idle packet.

I have done many little things for Johnson since I had the pleasure of seeing you; and I have finished one piece in the way of Pope's "Moral Epistles:" but from your silence I have everything to fear; so I have

only sent you two melancholy things, which I tremble lest they should too well suit the tone of your present feelings.

In a fortnight I move, bag and baggage, to Nithsdale: till then, my direction is at this place; after that period it will be at Ellisland, near Dumfries. It would extremely oblige me were it but half a line, to let me know how you are, and where you are. Can I be indifferent to the fate of a man to whom I owe so much—a man whom I not only esteem, but venerate?

My warmest good wishes and most respectful compliments to Mrs. Blacklock, and Miss Johnson, if she is with you.

I cannot conclude without telling you that I am more and more pleased with the step I took respecting "my Jean." Two things, from my happy experience, I set down as apophthegms in life—A wife's head is immaterial compared with her heart; and, "Virtue's (for wisdom, what poet pretends to it?) ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Adieu! R. B.

CXXVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

ELLISLAND, 17th December, 1788.

MY DEAR HONOURED FRIEND,

Yours dated Edinburgh, which I have just read, makes me very unhappy. "Almost blind and wholly deaf" are melancholy news of human nature; but when told of a much-loved and honoured friend, they carry misery in the sound. Goodness on your part and gratitude on mine began a tie which has gradually entwisted itself among the dearest chords of my bosom, and I tremble at the omens of your late and present ailing habit and shattered health. You miscalculate matters widely when you forbid my waiting on you,

lest it should hurt my worldly concerns. My small scale of farming is exceedingly more simple and easy than what you have lately seen at Moreham Mains. But, be that as it may, the heart of the man and the fancy of the poet are the two grand considerations for which I live: if miry ridges and dirty dunghills are to engross the best part of the functions of my soul immortal, I had better been a rook or a magpie at once, and then I should not have been plagued with any ideas superior to breaking of clods and picking up grubs; not to mention barn-door cocks or mallards—creatures with which I could almost exchange lives at any time. If you continue so deaf, I am afraid a visit will be no great pleasure to either of us; but if I hear you are got so well again as to be able to relish conversation, look you to it, Madam, for I will make my threatening good. I am to be at the New Year Day fair of Ayr, and by all that is sacred in the world, friend, I will come and see you.

Your meeting, which you so well describe, with your old schoolfellow and friend was truly interesting. Out upon the ways of the world! they spoil these "social offsprings of the heart." Two veterans of the "men of the world" would have met with little more heart-workings than two old hacks worn out on the road. Apropos, is not the Scotch phrase, "Auld lang syne," exceedingly expressive? There is an old song and tune which has often thrilled through my soul. You know I am an enthusiast in old Scotch songs. I shall give you the verses on the other sheet, as I suppose Mr. Ker will save you this postage.

AULD LANG SYNE.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?

Light be the turf on the breast of the Heaven-inspired-poet who composed this glorious fragment ! There is more of the fire of native genius in it than in half a dozen of modern English Bacchanalians ! * * *

R. B.

CXXVII.

TO

MR. WILLIAM CRUIKSHANK.

ELLISLAND, [December] 1788.

I HAVE not room, my dear friend, to answer all the particulars of your last kind letter. I shall be in Edinburgh on some business very soon ; and as I shall be two days, or perhaps three, in town, we shall discuss matters *viva voce*. My knee, I believe, will never be entirely well ; and an unlucky fall this winter has made it still worse. I well remember the circumstance you allude to respecting Creech's opinion of Mr. Nicol ; but as the first gentleman owes me still about fifty pounds, I dare not meddle in the affair.

It gave me a very heavy heart to read such accounts of the consequence of your quarrel with that puritanic, rotten-hearted, hell-commissioned scoundrel, Adam. If, notwithstanding your unprecedented industry in public and your irreproachable conduct in private life, he still has you so much in his power, what ruin may he not bring on some others I could name ?

Many and happy returns of seasons to you, with your dearest and worthiest friend, and the lovely little pledge of your happy union. May the great Author of life, and of every enjoyment that can render life delightful, make her that comfortable blessing to you both which you so ardently wish for, and which, allow me to say, you so well deserve ! Glance over the foregoing verses, and let me have your blots. Adieu !

R. B.

CXXVIII.

TO MR. JOHN TENNANT,

AUCHENBEY.

December 22, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I yesterday tried my cask of whisky for the first time, and I assure you it does you great credit. It will bear five waters, strong, or six, ordinary, toddy. The whisky of this country is a most rascally liquor ; and, by consequence, only drunk by the most rascally part of the inhabitants. I am persuaded, if you once get a footing here, you might do a great deal of business in the way of consumpt ; and should you commence distiller again, this is the native barley country. I am ignorant if, in your present way of dealing, you would think it worth your while to extend your business so far as this country side. I write you this on the account of an accident, which I must take the merit of having partly designed too. A neighbour of mine, a John Currie, miller in Carse-mill—a man who is, in a word, a “very” good man, even for a £500 bargain—he and his wife were in my house the time I broke open the cask. They keep a country public-house, and sell a great deal of foreign spirits, but all along thought that whisky would have degraded their house. They were perfectly astonished at my whisky, both for its taste and strength ; and, by their desire, I write you to know if you could supply them with liquor of an equal quality, and what price. Please write me by first post, and direct to me at Ellisland, near Dumfries. If you could take a jaunt this way yourself, I have a spare spoon, knife, and fork, very much at your service. My compliments to Mrs. Tennant, and all the good folks in Glenconner and Barquharry.—R. B.

CXIX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

ELLISLAND,

New-year-day Morning, 1789.

THIS, dear Madam, is a morning of wishes, and would to God that I came under the Apostle James's description!—"the prayer of a righteous man availeth much." In that case, Madam, you should welcome in a year full of blessings: everything that obstructs or disturbs tranquillity and self-enjoyment should be removed, and every pleasure that frail humanity can taste should be yours. I own myself so little a Presbyterian, that I approve of set times and seasons of more than ordinary acts of devotion, for breaking in on that habituated routine of life and thought which is so apt to reduce our existence to a kind of instinct, or even sometimes, and with some minds, to a state very little superior to mere machinery.

This day—the first Sunday of May—a breezy, blue-skied noon some time about the beginning, and a hoary morning and calm sunny day about the end, of autumn—these, time out of mind, have been with me a kind of holiday.

I believe I owe this to that glorious paper in the Spectator, "The Vision of Mirza," a piece that struck my young fancy before I was capable of fixing an idea to a word of three syllables: "On the 5th day of the moon, which, according to the custom of my forefathers, I always *keep holy*, after having washed myself and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hill of Bagdad, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer," &c.

We know nothing, or next to nothing, of the substance or structure of our souls, so cannot account for those seeming caprices in them that

one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which on minds of a different cast makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favourite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the harebell, the foxglove, the wild-brier rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never hear the loud, solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of grey plovers in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the Æolian harp, passive takes the impression of the passing accident? Or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities—a God that made all things—man's immaterial and immortal nature—and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave—these proofs that we deduct by dint of our own powers of observation. However respectable individuals in all ages have been, I have ever looked on Mankind in the lump to be nothing better than a foolish, headstrong, credulous, unthinking Mob; and their universal belief has ever had extremely little weight with me. Still I am a very sincere believer in the Bible; but I am drawn by the conviction of a Man, not by the halter of an Ass.

Apropos to an Ass, how do you like the following apostrophe to Dulness, which I intend to interweave in "The Poet's Progress":—

"O Dulness, portion of the truly blest!" &c.

If I am to be so happy as to have it in my power to see you when I go

to Ayr Fair, which I very much doubt, I shall try to dine at Dunlop in the Wednesday of that week.

R. B.

CXXX.

TO DR. MOORE,
LONDON.

ELLISLAND, 4th January, 1789.

SIR,

As often as I think of writing to you, which has been three or four times every week these six months, it gives me something so like the idea of an ordinary-sized statue offering at a conversation with the Rhodian Colossus, that my mind misgives me, and the affair always miscarries somewhere between purpose and resolve. I have at last got some business with you, and business letters are written by the style-book. I say my business is with you, Sir; for you never had any with me, except the business that benevolence has in the mansion of poverty.

The character and employment of a poet were formerly my pleasure, but are now my pride. I know that a very great deal of my late *éclat* was owing to the singularity of my situation and the honest prejudice of Scotsmen; but still, as I said in the preface to my first edition, I do look upon myself as having some pretensions from Nature to the poetic character. I have not a doubt but the knack, the aptitude to learn the Muses' trade, is a gift bestowed by Him "who forms the secret bias of the soul;" but I as firmly believe that *excellence* in the profession is the fruit of industry, labour, attention, and pains—at least I am resolved to try my doctrine by the test of experience. Another appearance from the press I put off to a very distant day—a day that may never arrive; but poesy I am determined to prosecute with all my vigour. Nature has given very few, if any,

of the profession the talents of shining in every species of composition. I shall try (for until trial it is impossible to know) whether she has qualified me to shine in any one. The worst of it is, by the time one has finished a piece, it has been so often viewed and reviewed before the mental eye, that one loses in a good measure the powers of critical discrimination. Here the best criterion I know is a friend, not only of abilities to judge, but with good-nature enough, like a prudent teacher with a young learner, to praise perhaps a little more than is exactly just, lest the thin-skinned animal fall into that most deplorable of all poetic diseases—heart-breaking despondency of himself. Dare I, Sir, already immensely indebted to your goodness, ask the additional obligation of your being that friend to me? I enclose you an essay of mine, in a walk of poesy to me entirely new; I mean the Epistle addressed to R. G., Esq., or Robert Graham of Finty, Esq., a gentleman of uncommon worth, to whom I lie under very great obligations. The story of the poem, like most of my poems, is connected with my own story; and to give you the one I must give you something of the other. I cannot boast of Mr. Creech's ingenuous fair-dealing to me. He kept me hanging about Edinburgh from the 7th August, 1787, until the 13th April, 1788, before he would condescend to give me a statement of affairs; nor had I got it even then, but for an angry letter I wrote him, which irritated his pride. "I could" not "a tale," but a detail, "unfold;" but what am I that should speak against the Lord's anointed Bailie of Edinburgh.

I believe I shall in whole, £100 copyright included, clear about £400 some little odds; and even part of this depends upon what the gentleman has yet to settle with me. I give

you this information, because you did me the honour to interest yourself much in my welfare. I give you this information, but I give it to yourself only; for I am still much in the gentleman's mercy. Perhaps I injure the man in the idea I am sometimes tempted to have of him: God forbid I should! A little time will try, for in a month I shall go to town to wind up the business, if possible.

To give the rest of my story in brief: I have married "my Jean," and taken a farm. With the first step I have every day more and more reason to be satisfied; with the last it is rather the reverse. I have a younger brother, who supports my aged mother; another still younger brother, and three sisters, in a farm. On my last return from Edinburgh it cost me about £180 to save them from ruin. Not that I have lost so much: I only interposed between my brother and his impending fate by the loan of so much. I give myself no airs on this, for it was mere selfishness on my part: I was conscious that the wrong scale of the balance was pretty heavily charged, and I thought that throwing a little filial piety and fraternal affection into the scale in my favour might help to smooth matters at the *grand reckoning*. There is still one thing would make my circumstances quite easy; I have an Excise-officer's commission, and I live in the midst of a country division. My request to Mr. Graham, who is one of the Commissioners of Excise, was, if in his power, to procure me that division. If I were very sanguine, I might hope that some of my great patrons might procure me a treasury-warrant for supervisor, surveyor-general, &c.

Thus, secure of a livelihood, "to thee, sweet Poetry, delightful maid," I would consecrate my future days.—R. B.

CXXXI.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

ELLISLAND, *January 6, 1789.*

MANY happy returns of the season to you, my dear Sir! May you be comparatively happy, up to your comparative worth, among the sons of men; which wish would, I am sure, make you one of the most blest of the human race.

I do not know if passing a "writer to the Signet" be a trial of scientific merit or a mere business of friends and interest. However it be, let me quote you my two favourite passages, which, though I have repeated them ten thousand times, still they rouse my manhood and steel my resolution like inspiration.

—On Reason build resolve,
That column of true majesty in man — *Young*.
Hear, Alfred, hero of the state,
Thy Genius Heaven's high will declare
The triumph of the truly great,
Is never, never to despair!
Is never to despair! — *Masque of Alfred*.

I grant you enter the lists of life to struggle for bread, business, notice, and distinction, in common with hundreds. But who are they? Men like yourself, and of that aggregate body your compeers, seven-tenths of them come short of your advantages, natural and accidental; while two of those that remain, either neglect their parts, as flowers blooming in a desert, or misspend their strength, like a bull goring a bramble bush.

But to change the theme: I am still catering for Johnson's publication; and among others I have brushed up the following old favourite song a little, with a view to your worship. I have only altered a word here and there; but if you like the humour of it, we shall think of a stanza or two to add to it:—

Robin shure in hairst, I shure wi' him:
Fient a hook had I, yet I stuck to him,
I gaed up to Dunse to wairp a wab o' plaidin',
At his daddy's yett, wha met me but Robin?

R. B.

CCXXXII.
TO PROFESSOR DUGALD
STEWART.

ELLISLAND, 20th Jan., 1789.

SIR,

The enclosed sealed packet I sent to Edinburgh a few days after I had the happiness of meeting you in Ayrshire, but you were gone for the Continent. I have now added a few more of my productions, those for which I am indebted to the Nithsdale Muses. The piece inscribed to R. G., Esq. is a copy of verses I sent Mr. Graham of Fintry, accompanying a request for his assistance in a matter, to me, of very great moment. To that gentleman I am already doubly indebted for deeds of kindness of serious import to my dearest interests, done in a manner grateful to the delicate feelings of sensibility. This poem is a species of composition new to me, but I do not intend it shall be my last essay of the kind, as you will see by the "Poet's Progress." These fragments, if my design succeed, are but a small part of the intended whole. I propose it shall be the work of my utmost exertions, ripened by years: of course I do not wish it much known. The fragment beginning "A little upright, pert, tart, &c." I have not shown to man living, till I now send it you. It forms the postulata, the axioms, the definition of a character, which, if it appear at all, shall be placed in a variety of lights. This particular part I send you merely as a sample of my hand at portrait-sketching; but, lest idle conjecture should pretend to point out the original, please to let it be for your single, sole inspection.

Need I make any apology for this trouble, to a gentleman who has treated me with such marked benevolence and peculiar kindness—who has entered into my interests with so much zeal, and on whose critical

decisions I can so fully depend? A poet as I am by trade, these decisions are to me of the last consequence. My late transient acquaintance among some of the mere rank and file of greatness. I resign with ease; but to the distinguished champions of genius and learning, I shall be ever ambitious of being known. The native genius and accurate discernment in Mr. Stewart's critical strictures, the justness (iron justice, for he has no bowels of compassion for a poor poetic sinner) of Dr. Gregory's remarks, and the delicacy of Professor Dalzell's taste, I shall ever revere.

I shall be in Edinburgh some time next month.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your highly obliged and very
humble Servant,

R. B.

CCXXXIII.
TO BISHOP GEDDES.

ELLISLAND, February 3d, 1789.

VENERABLE FATHER,

As I am conscious that, wherever I am, you do me the honour to interest yourself in my welfare, it gives me pleasure to inform you, that I am here at last, stationary in the serious business of life, and have now not only the retired leisure, but the hearty inclination, to attend to those great and important questions—what I am? where I am? and for what I am destined?

In that first concern, the conduct of the man, there was ever but one side on which I was habitually blameable, and there I have secured myself in the way pointed out by Nature and Nature's God. I was sensible that to so blameable a nature as a poor poet, a wit, and finally a man of letters, were incumbrances, which a species of prudence would bid him shun; but

when the alternative was, being at eternal warfare with myself, on account of habitual follies, to give them no worse name, which no general example, no licentious wit, no sophistical infidelity, would, to me, ever justify, I must have been a fool to have hesitated, and a madman to have made another choice. Besides, I had in "my Jean" a long and much-loved fellow-creature's happiness or misery among my hands, and who could trifle with such a deposit?

In the affair of a livelihood, I think myself tolerably secure: I have good hopes of my farm; but should they fail, I have an excise commission, which, on my single petition, will at any time procure me bread. There is a certain stigma affixed to the character of an excise officer, but I do not pretend to borrow honour from my profession; and though the salary be comparatively small, it is luxury to anything that the first twenty-five years of my life taught me to expect. . . .

Thus, with a rational aim and method in life, you may easily guess, my reverend and much-honoured friend, that my characteristic trade is not forgotten. I am, if possible, more than ever an enthusiast to the Muses. I am determined to study man and nature, and in that view incessantly; and to try if the ripening and corrections of years can enable me to produce something worth preserving.

You will see in your book, which I beg your pardon for detaining so long, that I have been tuning my lyre on the banks of Nith. Some large poetic plans that are floating in my imagination, or partly put in execution, I shall impart to you when I have the pleasure of meeting with you; which, if you are then in Edinburgh, I shall have about the beginning of March.

That acquaintance, worthy Sir, with which you were pleased to honour me, you must still allow me to challenge; for with whatever unconcern I give up my transient connexion with the merely great, I cannot lose the patronizing notice of the learned and good without the bitterest regret.

R. B.

CXXXIV.

TO MR. JAMES BURNES,
MONTROSE.

ELLISLAND, 9th February, 1789.

MY DEAR SIR,

Why I did not write to you long ago is what, even on the rack, I could not answer. If you can in your mind form an idea of indolence, dissipation, hurry, cares, change of country, entering on untried scenes of life, all combined, you will save me the trouble of a blushing apology. It could not be want of regard for a man for whom I had a high esteem before I knew him—an esteem which has much increased since I did know him; and this caveat entered, I shall plead guilty to any other indictment with which you shall please to charge me.

After I parted from you, for many months my life was one continued scene of dissipation. Here at last I am become stationary, and have taken a farm and—a wife.

The farm is beautifully situated on the Nith, a large river that runs by Dumfries, and falls into the Solway Frith. I have gotten a lease of my farm as long as I pleased; but how it may turn out is just a guess, and it is yet to improve and enclose, &c.; however, I have good hopes of my bargain on the whole.

My wife is my Jean, with whose story you are partly acquainted. I found I had a much-loved fellow-creature's happiness or misery among

my hands, and I durst not trifle with so sacred a deposit. Indeed I have not any reason to repent the step I have taken, as I have attached myself to a very good wife, and have shaken myself loose of every bad failing.

I have found my book a very profitable business, and with the profits of it I have begun life pretty decently. Should Fortune not favour me in farming, as I have no great faith in her fickle ladyship, I have provided myself in another resource, which, however some folks may affect to despise it, is still a comfortable shift in the day of misfortune. In the heyday of my fame, a gentleman, whose name at least I daresay you know, as his estate lies somewhere near Dundee, Mr. Graham of Fintry, one of the Commissioners of Excise, offered me the commission of an excise officer. I thought it prudent to accept the offer; and accordingly I took my instructions, and have my commission by me. Whether I may ever do duty, or be a penny the better for it, is what I do not know; but I have the comfortable assurance that, come whatever ill fate will, I can, on my simple petition to the Excise-board, get into employ.

We have lost poor uncle Robert this winter. He has long been very weak, and with a very little alteration on him, he expired 3d Jan.

His son William has been with me this winter, and goes in May to be an apprentice to a mason. His other son, the eldest, John, comes to me, I expect, in summer. They are both remarkably stout young fellows, and promise to do well. His only daughter, Fanny, has been with me ever since her father's death, and I purpose keeping her in my family till she be quite woman grown, and fit for better service. She is one of the cleverest girls, and has one of the most amiable dispositions, I have ever seen.

All friends in this country and Ayrshire are well. Remember me to all friends in the north. My wife joins me in compliments to Mrs. B. and family.

I am ever, my dear Cousin,

Yours sincerely,

R. B.

CXXXV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

ELLISLAND, 4th March, 1789.

HERE am I, my honoured friend, returned safe from the capital. To a man who has a home, however humble or remote—if that home is like mine, the scene of domestic comfort—the bustle of Edinburgh will soon be a business of sickening disgust.

“Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate you!”

When I must skulk into a corner, lest the rattling equipage of some gaping blockhead should mangle me in the mire, I am tempted to exclaim, “What merits has he had, or what demerit have I had, in some state of pre-existence, that he is ushered into this state of being with the sceptre of rule and the key of riches in his puny fist, and I am kicked into the world the sport of folly, or the victim of pride?” I have read somewhere of a monarch (in Spain I think it was), who was so out of humour with the Ptolemean system of astronomy, that he said, had he been of the Creator's council, he could have saved Him a great deal of labour and absurdity. I will not defend this blasphemous speech; but often, as I have glided with humble stealth through the pomp of Princes Street, it has suggested itself to me, as an improvement on the present human figure, that a man, in proportion to his own conceit of his consequence in the world, could have pushed out the longitude of his common size, as a snail pushes out

his horns, or as we draw out a perspective. This trifling alteration, not to mention the prodigious saving it would be in the tear and wear of the neck and limb sinews of many of his Majesty's liege subjects, in the way of tossing the head and tiptoe strutting, would evidently turn out a vast advantage, in enabling us at once to adjust the ceremonials in making a bow, or making way to a great man, and that too within a second of the precise spherical angle of reverence, or an inch of the particular point of respectful distance, which the important creature itself requires; as a measuring-glance at its towering altitude would determine the affair like instinct.

You are right, Madam, in your idea of poor Mylne's poem, which he has addressed to me. The piece has a good deal of merit, but it has one great fault—it is, by far, too long. Besides, my success has encouraged such a shoal of ill-spawned monsters to crawl into public notice, under the title of Scottish poets, that the very term Scottish poetry borders on the burlesque. When I write to Mr. Carfrae, I shall advise him rather to try one of his deceased friend's English pieces. I am prodigiously hurried with my own matters, else I would have requested a perusal of all Mylne's poetic performances, and would have offered his friends my assistance in either selecting or correcting what would be proper for the press. What it is that occupies me so much, and perhaps a little oppresses my present spirits, shall fill up a paragraph in some future letter. In the meantime, allow me to close this epistle with a few lines done by a friend of mine * * * * *. I give you them, that, as you have seen the original, you may guess whether one or two alterations I have

ventured to make in them be any real improvement.

"Like the fair plant that from our touch with-draws,
Shrink, mildly fearful, even from applause;
Be all a mother's fondest hope can dream,
And all you are, my charming Rachel, seem.
Straight as the fox-glove, ere her bells disclose,
Mild as the maiden-blushing hawthorn blows,
Fair as the fairest of each lovely kind,
Your form shall be the image of your mind;
Your manners shall so true your soul express,
That all shall long to know the worth they guess;
Congenial hearts shall greet with kindred love,
And even sick'ning envy must approve."

R. B.

CXXXVI.

TO THE REV. P. CARFRAE.

[ELLISLAND, *March*, 1789.]

REV. SIR,

I do not recollect that I have ever felt a severer pang of shame, than on looking at the date of your obliging letter which accompanied Mr. Mylne's poem. . . .

I am much to blame: the honour Mr. Mylne has done me, greatly enhanced in its value by the endearing, though melancholy, circumstance of its being the last production of his muse, deserved a better return.

I have, as you hint, thought of sending a copy of the poem to some periodical publication; but, on second thoughts, I am afraid that in the present case it would be an improper step. My success, perhaps as much accidental as merited, has brought an inundation of nonsense under the name of Scottish poetry. Subscription-bills for Scottish poems have so dunned, and daily do dun, the public, that the very name is in danger of contempt. For these reasons, if publishing any of Mr. Mylne's poems in a magazine, &c., be at all prudent, in my opinion it certainly should not be a Scottish poem. The profits of the labours of a man of genius are, I hope, as honourable as any profits whatever; and Mr. Mylne's relations are most justly entitled to that honest harvest,

which fate has denied himself to reap. But let the friends of Mr. Mylne's fame (among whom I crave the honour of ranking myself) always keep in eye his respectability as a man and as a poet, and take no measure that, before the world knows anything about him, would risk his name and character being classed with the fools of the times.

I have, Sir, some experience of publishing; and the way in which I would proceed with Mr. Mylne's poems is this:—I will publish in two or three English and Scottish public papers any one of his English poems which should, by private judges, be thought the most excellent, and mention it, at the same time, as one of the productions of a Lothian farmer, of respectable character, lately deceased, whose poems his friends had it in idea to publish, soon, by subscription, for the sake of his numerous family;—not in pity to that family, but in justice to what his friends think the poetic merits of the deceased; and to secure, in the most effectual manner, to those tender connexions, whose right it is, the pecuniary reward of those merits.—R. B.

CXXXVII.

TO DR. MOORE,
LONDON.

ELLISLAND, 23d March, 1789.

SIR,

The gentleman who will deliver you this is a Mr. Nielson, a worthy clergyman in my neighbourhood, and a very particular acquaintance of mine. As I have troubled him with this packet, I must turn him over to your goodness, to recompense him for it in a way in which he much needs your assistance, and where you can effectually serve him. Mr. Nielson is on his way for France,

to wait on his Grace of Queensberry, on some little business of a good deal of importance to him, and he wishes for your instructions respecting the most eligible mode of travelling, &c. for him, when he has crossed the Channel. I should not have dared to take this liberty with you, but that I am told, by those who have the honour of your personal acquaintance, that to be a poor honest Scotchman is a letter of recommendation to you, and that to have it in your power to serve such a character gives you much pleasure.

The enclosed ode is a compliment to the memory of the late Mrs. Oswald, of Auchincruive. You, probably, knew her personally, an honour of which I cannot boast; but I spent my early years in her neighbourhood, and among her servants and tenants. I know that she was detested with the most heartfelt cordiality. However, in the particular part of her conduct which roused my poetic wrath, she was much less blameable. In January last, on my road to Ayrshire, I had put up at Bailie Whigham's, in Sanquhar, the only tolerable inn in the place. The frost was keen, and the grim evening and howling wind were ushering in a night of snow and drift. My horse and I were both much fatigued with the labours of the day; and just as my friend the Bailie and I were bidding defiance to the storm over a smoking bowl, in wheels the funeral pageantry of the late great Mrs. Oswald, and poor I am forced to brave all the horrors of the tempestuous night, and jade my horse, my young favourite horse, whom I had just christened Pegasus, twelve miles farther on, through the wildest moors and hills of Ayrshire, to New Cumnock, the next inn. The powers of poesy and prose sink under me, when I would describe what I felt. Suffice it to say, that when a good fire at New Cumnock had so

far recovered my frozen sinews, I sat down and wrote the enclosed ode.

I was at Edinburgh lately, and settled finally with Mr. Creech; and I must own that at last he has been amicable and fair with me.—R. B.

CCXXXVIII.

TO MR. PETER HILL.

ELLISLAND, *2nd April, 1789.*

I WILL make no excuses, my dear Bibliopolus, (God forgive me for murdering language!) that I have sat down to write you on this vile paper.

It is economy, Sir; it is that cardinal virtue, prudence; so I beg you will sit down, and either compose or borrow a panegyric. If you are going to borrow, apply to Ramsay to compose, or rather to compound, something very clever on my remarkable frugality; that I write to one of my most esteemed friends on this wretched paper, which was originally intended for the venal fist of some drunken exciseman, to take dirty notes in a miserable vault of an ale-cellar.

O Frugality! thou mother of ten thousand blessings!—thou cook of fat beef and dainty greens!—thou manufacturer of warm Shetland hose and comfortable surtouts!—thou old housewife, darning thy decayed stockings with thy ancient spectacles on thy aged nose!—lead me, hand me in thy clutching palsied fist, up those heights, and through those thickets, hitherto inaccessible and impervious to my anxious, weary feet: not those Parnassian crags, bleak and barren, where the hungry worshippers of fame are, breathless, clambering, hanging between heaven and hell, but those glittering cliffs of Potosi, where the all-sufficient, all-powerful deity, Wealth, holds his immediate courts of joys and pleasures; where the sunny exposure

of plenty and the hot walls of profusion produce those blissful fruits of luxury, exotics in this world, and natives of paradise! Thou withered sybil, my sage conductress, usher me into thy refulgent, adored presence! The power, splendid and potent as he now is, was once the puling nursling of thy faithful care and tender arms! Call me thy son, thy cousin, thy kinsman, thy favourite, and adjure the god by the scenes of his infant years no longer to repulse me as a stranger or an alien, but to favour me with his peculiar countenance and protection! He daily bestows his greatest kindness on the undeserving and the worthless: assure him, that I bring ample documents of meritorious demerits! Pledge yourself for me, that for the glorious cause of Lucre I will do anything, be anything—but the horse-leech of private oppression, or the vulture of public robbery!!!

But to descend from heroics—what, in the name of all the devils at once, have you done with my trunk? Please let me have it by the first carrier, except his name be Niven; he is a rascal who imposed, or would have imposed on me the other day most infamously.

I want a Shakespeare; I want likewise an English dictionary—Johnson's, I suppose, is best. In these and all my prose commissions the cheapest is always the best for me. There is a small debt of honour that I owe Mr. Robert Cleghorn, in Saughton Mills, my worthy friend, and your well-wisher. Please give him, and urge him to take it, the first time you see him, ten shillings' worth of anything you have to sell, and place it to my account.

The library scheme that I mentioned to you is already begun, under the direction of Captain Riddell. There is another in emulation of it

going on at Closeburn, under the auspices of Mr. Monteith, of Closeburn, which will be on a greater scale than ours. Capt. Riddell gave his infant society a great many of his old books, else I had written you on that subject; but one of these days I shall trouble you with a commission for "The Monkland Friendly Society:" a copy of "The Spectator," "Mirror," and "Lounger," "Man of Feeling," "Man of the World," "Guthrie's Geographical Grammar," with some religious pieces, will likely be our first order. . . .

When I grow richer, I will write to you on gilt post, to make amends for this sheet. At present every guinea has a five guinea errand with,

My dear Sir,
Your faithful, poor, but honest Friend,
R. B.

CXXXIX.

TO MRS. McMURDO,
DRUMLANRIG.

ELLISLAND, 2d May, 1789.

MADAM,

I have finished the piece which had the happy fortune to be honoured with your approbation; and never did little miss with more sparkling pleasure show her applauded sampler to partial mamma, than I now send my poem to you and Mr. McMurdo, if he is returned to Drumlant. You cannot easily imagine what thin-skinned animals, what sensitive plants, poor poets are. How do we shrink into the embittered corner of self-abasement, when neglected or condemned by those to whom we look up! and how do we, in erect importance, add another cubit to our stature on being noticed and applauded by those whom we honour and respect! My late visit to Drumlant has, I can tell you, Madam,

given me a balloon waft up Parnassus, where on my fancied elevation I regard my poetic self with no small degree of complacency. Surely, with all their sins, the rhyming tribe are not ungrateful creatures. I recollect your goodness to your humble guest, I see Mr. McMurdo adding to the politeness of the gentleman the kindness of a friend, and my heart swells as it would burst, with warm emotions and ardent wishes! It may be it is not gratitude; it may be a mixed sensation. That strange, shifting, double animal man is so generally, at best, but a negative, often a worthless, creature, that we cannot see real goodness and native worth without feeling the bosom glow with sympathetic approbation.

With every sentiment of grateful respect, I have the honour to be,
Madam, your obliged and grateful
humble Servant, R. B.

CXL.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

ELLISLAND, 4th May, 1789.

You see, Madam, that I am returned to my folio epistles again. I no sooner hit on any poetic plan or fancy, but I wish to send it to you: and if knowing or reading them gives half the pleasure to you, that communicating them to you gives to me, I am satisfied.

As I am not devoutly attached to a certain monarch, I cannot say that my heart ran any risk of bursting, on Thursday was se'enight, with the struggling emotions of gratitude. God forgive me for speaking evil of dignities! but I must say that I look on the whole business as a solemn farce of fragrant mummery.

The following are a few stanzas of New Psalmody for that "joyful solemnity," which I sent to a London

newspaper with the date and preface following :—

KILMARNOCK, 25th April.

MR. PRINTER.—In a certain chapel not fifty leagues from the market cross of this good town, the following Stanzas of Psalmody, it is said, were composed for, and devoutly sung on—the late joyful solemnity of the 23rd.

"O sing a new song to the L—d,
Make, all and every one,
A joyful noise, even for the King
His restoration, &c."

So much for Psalmody—You must know that the publisher of one of the most blasphemous party London newspapers is an acquaintance of mine, and as I am a little tintured with Buff and Blue myself, I now and then help him to a stanza.

I have another poetic whim in my head, which I at present dedicate, or rather inscribe to the Rt. Honble. Ch. J. Fox; but how long that fancy may hold, I cannot say. A few of the first lines I have just rough-sketches as follows :—

SKETCH.

How wisdom and folly meet, mix, and unite;
How virtue and vice blend their black and their white;

How genius, the illustrious father of fiction,
Confounds real and aw. reconciles contradiction—
I sing if these mortals, the cruels, shou'd bustle,
I care not, not I, let the cruels go whist!
But now for a patron, whose name and whose glory

At once may illustrate and honour my story.

Thou first of our orators, first of our wits,
Yet whose parts and acquirements seem mere lucky hits;

With knowledge so vast, and with judgment so strong,

No man with the half of 'em e'er went far wrong;

With passions so potent, an' fancies so bright,
No man with the half of 'em e'er went quite right;

A sorry, poor misbegot son of the Muses
For using thy name offers fifty excuses, &c.

On the 20th current I hope to have the honour of assuring you, in person, how sincerely I am, Madam, your highly obliged, and most obedient humble servt., R. B.

CXLI.

TO MR. ALEX. CUNNINGHAM.

ELLISLAND, 4th May, 1789.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your *duty-free* favour of the 26th April I received two days ago. I will not say I received it with pleasure; that is the cold compliment of ceremony: I perused it, Sir, with delicious satisfaction;—in short, it is such a letter, that not you, nor your friend, but the legislature, by express proviso in their postage laws, should frank. A letter informed with the soul of friendship is such an honour to human nature, that they should order it free ingress and egress to and from their bags and mails, as an encouragement and mark of distinction to super-eminent virtue.

I have just put the last hand to a little poem, which I think will be something to your taste. One morning lately, as I was out pretty early in the fields, sowing some grass seeds, I heard the burst of a shot from a neighbouring plantation, and presently a poor little wounded hare came crippling by me. You will guess my indignation at the inhuman fellow who could shoot a hare at this season, when all of them have young ones. Indeed there is something in that business of destroying for our sport individuals in the animal creation that do not injure us materially which I could never reconcile to my ideas of virtue.

Inhuman man I curse on thy barb'rous art,
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye!
May never pity sooth thee with a sigh,
Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart!—&c.

Let me know how you like my poem. I am doubtful whether it would not be an improvement to keep out the last stanza but one altogether.

Cruikshank is a glorious production of the Author of man. You,

he, and the noble Colonel of the Crochallan Fencibles are to me

"Dear as the ruddy drops which warm my heart."

I have a good mind to make verses on you all to the tune of "Three guid fellows ayont the glen."—R. B.

CXLII.

TO MR. RICHARD BROWN,
PORT-GLASGOW.

MAUCHLINE, 21st May, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was in the country by accident, and hearing of your safe arrival, I could not resist the temptation of wishing you joy on your return, wishing you would write to me before you sail again, wishing you would always set me down as your bosom friend, wishing you long life and prosperity, and that every good thing may attend you, wishing Mrs. Brown and your little ones as free of the evils of this world as is consistent with humanity, wishing you and she were to make two at the ensuing lying-in with which Mrs. B. threatens very soon to favour me, wishing I had longer time to write to you at present, and, finally, wishing that if there is to be another state of existence, Mr. B., Mrs. B., our little ones, and both families, and you and I, in some snug retreat, may make a jovial party to all eternity!

My direction is at Ellisland, near Dumfries. Yours, R. B.

CXLIII.

TO MR. JAMES HAMILTON,
GLASGOW.

ELLISLAND, 26th May, 1789.

I WOULD fain offer, my dear Sir, a word of sympathy with your misfortunes; but it is a tender string,

and I know not how to touch it. It is easy to flourish a set of high-flown sentiments on the subjects that would give great satisfaction to—a breast quite at ease; but as one observes who was very seldom mistaken in the theory of life, "The heart knoweth its own sorrows, and a stranger intermeddleth not therewith."

Among some distressful emergencies that I have experienced in life, I ever laid this down as my foundation of comfort—*That he who has lived the life of an honest man has by no means lived in vain!*

With every wish for your welfare and future success,

I am, my dear Sir,

Sincerely yours,
R. B.

CXLIV.

TO MR. JOHN MCAULAY,
TOWN CLERK OF DUMBARTON.

ELLISLAND, 4th June, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

Though I am not without my fears respecting my fate at that grand, universal inquest of right and wrong commonly called *The Last Day*, yet I trust there is one sin which that arch-vagabond Satan, who I understand is to be king's evidence, cannot throw in my teeth—I mean ingratitude. There is a certain pretty large quantum of kindness for which I remain, and from inability I fear must still remain, your debtor; but though unable to repay the debt, I assure you, Sir, I shall ever warmly remember the obligation. It gives me the sincerest pleasure to hear by my old acquaintance, Mr. Kennedy, that you are, in immortal Allan's language, "Hale, and weel, and living;" and that your charming family are well, and promising to be an amiable and respectable addition

to the company of performers whom the Great Manager of the Drama of Man is bringing into action for the succeeding age.

With respect to my welfare, a subject in which you once warmly and effectively interested yourself, I am here in my old way, holding my plough, marking the growth of my corn, or the health of my dairy; and at times sauntering by the delightful windings of the Nith, on the margin of which I have built my humble domicile; praying for seasonable weather, or holding an intrigue with the Muses—the only gypsies with whom I have now any intercourse. As I am entered into the holy state of matrimony, I trust my face is turned completely Zionward; and as it is a rule with all honest fellows to repeat no grievances, I hope that the little poetic licences of former days will of course fall under the oblivious influence of some good-natured statute of celestial prescription. In my family devotion, which, like a good Presbyterian, I occasionally give to my household folks, I am extremely fond of the psalm, "Let not the errors of my youth," &c. and that other, "Lo, children are God's heritage," &c. in which last Mrs. Burns, who, by the by, has a glorious "wood-note wild" at either old song or psalmody, joins me with the pathos of Handel's "Messiah."—R. B.

CXLV.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

ELLISLAND, 8th June, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am perfectly ashamed of myself when I look at the date of your last. It is not that I forget the friend of my heart and the companion of my peregrinations; but I have been condemned to drudgery beyond

sufferance, though not, thank God, beyond redemption. I have had a collection of poems by a lady put into my hands to prepare them for the press; which horrid task, with sowing corn with my own hand, a parcel of masons, wrights, plasterers, &c. to attend to, roaming on business through Ayrshire—all this was against me, and the very first dreadful article was of itself too much for me.

13th.—I have not had a moment to spare from incessant toil since the 8th. Life, my dear Sir, is a serious matter. You know by experience that a man's individual self is a good deal, but, believe me, a wife and family of children, whenever you have the honour to be a husband and a father, will show you that your present and most anxious hours of solitude are spent on trifles. The welfare of those who are very dear to us, whose only support, hope, and stay we are—this, to a generous mind, is another sort of more important object of care than any concerns whatever which centre merely in the individual. On the other hand, let no young, unmarried, rakehell dog among you make a song of his pretended liberty and freedom from care. If the relations we stand in to king, country, kindred, and friends, be anything but the visionary fancies of dreaming metaphysicians; if religion, virtue, magnanimity, generosity, humanity, and justice, be aught but empty sounds; then the man who may be said to live only for others, for the beloved, honourable female, whose tender, faithful embrace endears life, and for the helpless little innocents who are to be the men and women, the worshippers of his God, the subjects of his king, and the support, nay, the very vital existence, of his country, in the ensuing age;—compare such a man with any fellow whatever, who, whether he bustle

and push in business among labourers, clerks, statesmen; or whether he roar and rant, and drink and sing, in taverns—a fellow over whose grave no one will breathe a single heigh-ho, except from the cobweb-tie of what is called good-fellowship—who has no view nor aim but what terminates in himself: if there be any grovelling earthborn wretch of our species, a renegade to common sense, who would fain believe that the noble creature man is no better than a sort of fungus, generated out of nothing, nobody knows how, and soon dissipating in nothing, nobody knows where; such a stupid beast, such a crawling reptile, might balance the foregoing unexaggerated comparison, but no one else would have the patience.

Forgive me, my dear Sir, for this long silence. *To make you amends*, I shall send you soon, and, (more encouraging still, without any postage), one or two rhymes of my later manufacture.—R. B.

CXLVI.

TO MISS HELEN MARIA
WILLIAMS.

ELLISLAND [July] 1789.

MADAM,

Of the many problems in the nature of that wonderful creature man, this is one of the most extraordinary, that he shall go on from day to day, from week to week, from month to month, or perhaps from year to year, suffering a hundred times more in an hour from the impotent consciousness of neglecting what he ought to do, than the very doing of it would cost him. I am deeply indebted to you, first for a most elegant poetic compliment, then for a polite, obliging letter, and lastly, for your excellent poem on the Slave Trade; and yet,

wretch that I am! though the debts were debts of honour, and the creditor a lady, I have put off and put off even the acknowledgment of the obligation, until you must indeed be the very angel I take you for, if you can forgive me.

Your poem I have read with the highest pleasure. I have a way whenever I read a book—I mean a book in our own trade, Madam, a poetic one—and when it is my own property, that I take a pencil and mark at the ends of verses, or note on margins and odd paper, little criticisms of approbation or disapprobation as I peruse along. I will make no apology for presenting you with a few unconnected thoughts that occurred to me in my repeated perusals of your poem. I want to show you that I have honesty enough to tell you what I take to be truths, even when they are not quite on the side of approbation; and I do it in the firm faith that you have equal greatness of mind to hear them with pleasure.

I know very little of scientific criticism; so all I can pretend to do in that intricate art is merely to note, as I read along, what passages strike me as being uncommonly beautiful, and where the expression seems to be perplexed or faulty.

The poem opens finely. There are none of these idle prefatory lines which one may skip over before one comes to the subject. Verses 9th and 10th in particular,

“Where ocean’s unseen bound
Leaves a drear world of waters round,”

are truly beautiful. The simile of the hurricane is likewise fine; and indeed, beautiful as the poem is, almost all the similes rise decidedly above it. From verse 31st to verse 50th is a pretty eulogy on Britain. Verse 36th, “That foul drama deep with wrong,” is nobly expressive. Verse 46th, I am afraid, is rather unworthy of the rest: “to dare to feel”

is an idea that I do not altogether like. The contrast of valour and mercy, from the 46th verse to the 50th, is admirable.

Either my apprehension is dull, or there is something a little confused in the apostrophe to Mr. Pitt. Verse 55th is the antecedent to verses 57th and 58th, but in verse 58th the connexion seems ungrammatical:—

"Powers * * * * *
With no gradations mark'd their flight,
But rose at once to glory's height."

"Ris'n" should be the word instead of "rose." Try it in prose. Powers,—their flight marked by no gradations, but (the same powers) risen at once to the height of glory. Likewise, verse 53rd, "For this" is evidently meant to lead on the sense of the verses 59th, 60th, 61st, and 62d; but let us try how the thread of connexion runs:—

"For this * * * * *
The deeds of mercy, that embrace
A distant sphere, an alien race,
Shall virtue's lips record, and claim
The fairest honours of thy name."

I beg pardon if I misapprehend the matter, but this appears to me the only imperfect passage in the poem. The comparison of the sunbeam is fine.

The compliment to the Duke of Richmond is, I hope, as just as it is certainly elegant. The thought,

"Virtue * * * * *
Sends from her unsullied source
The gems of thought their purest force,"

is exceeding beautiful. The idea, from verse 81st to the 85th, that the "blest decree" is like the beams of morning ushering in the glorious day of liberty, ought not to pass unnoticed or unapplauded. From verse 85th to verse 108th is an animated contrast between the unfeeling selfishness of the oppressor, on the one hand, and the misery of the captive, on the other. Verse 88th might perhaps be amended thus: "Nor ever *quit* her narrow

maze." We are said to *pass* a bound, but we *quit* a maze. Verse 100th is exquisitely beautiful:—

"They, whom wasted blessings tire."

Verse 110th, is, I doubt, a clashing of metaphors; "to load a span" is, I am afraid, an unwarrantable expression. In verse 114th, "Cast the universe in shade" is a fine idea. From the 115th verse to the 142d is a striking description of the wrongs of the poor African. Verse 120th, "The load of unremitted pain," is a remarkable, strong expression. The address to the advocates for abolishing the slave-trade, from verse 143d to verse 208th, is animated with the true life of genius. The picture of Oppression—

"While she links her impious chain,
And calculates the price of pain,
Weighs agony in sordid scales,
And marks if death or life prevails,"—

is nobly executed.

What a tender idea is in verse 180th! Indeed, that whole description of home may vie with Thomson's description of home, somewhere in the beginning of his "Autumn." I do not remember to have seen a stronger expression of misery than is contained in these verses:—

"Condemned, severe extreme, to live
When all is fled that home can give."

The comparison of our distant joys to distant objects is equally original and striking.

The character and manners of the dealer in the infernal traffic is a well done, though a horrid, picture. I am not sure how far introducing the sailor was right; for though the sailor's common characteristic is generosity, yet in this case he is certainly not only an unconcerned witness, but, in some degree, an efficient agent in the business. Verse 224th is a nervous . . . expression—"The heart convulsive anguish breaks." The description of the captive wretch when he arrives in the West Indies

is carried on with equal spirit. The thought that the oppressor's sorrow on seeing the slave pine is like the butcher's regret when his destined lamb dies a natural death is exceedingly fine.

I am got so much into the cant of criticism, that I begin to be afraid lest I have nothing except the cant of it; and instead of elucidating my author, am only benighting myself. For this reason, I will not pretend to go through the whole poem. Some few remaining beautiful lines, however, I cannot pass over. Verse 280th is the strongest description of selfishness I ever saw. The comparison in verses 285th and 286th is new and fine; and the line, "Your arms to penury you lend," is excellent.

In verse 317th "like" should certainly be "as" or "so;" for instance—

"His sway the hardened bosom leads
To cruelty's remorseless deeds;
As (or so) the blue lightning, when it springs
With fury on its livid wings,
Darts on the goal with rapid force,
Nor heeds that ruin marks its course."

If you insert the word "like" where I have placed "as," you must alter "darts" to "darting," and "heeds" to "heeding," in order to make it grammar. A tempest is a favourite subject with the poets, but I do not remember anything even in Thomson's "Winter" superior to your verses from the 347th to the 351st. Indeed the last simile, beginning with "Fancy may dress," &c. and ending with the 350th verse, is, in my opinion, the most beautiful passage in the poem; it would do honour to the greatest names that ever graced our profession.

I will not beg your pardon, Madam, for these strictures, as my conscience tells me, that for once in my life I have acted up to the duties of a Christian, in doing as I would be done by. . . .—R. B.

CXLVII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

ELLISLAND, 21st June, 1789.

DEAR MADAM,

Will you take the effusions, the miserable effusions, of low spirits, just as they flow from their bitter spring? I know not of any particular cause for this worst of all my foes besetting me; but for some time my soul has been beclouded with a thickening atmosphere of evil imaginations and gloomy presages. . . .

Monday Evening.

I have just heard Mr. Kirkpatrick preach a sermon. He is a man famous for his benevolence, and I revere him; but from such ideas of my Creator, good Lord, deliver me! Religion, my honoured friend, is surely a simple business, as it equally concerns the ignorant and the learned, the poor and the rich. That there is an incomprehensible Great Being, to whom I owe my existence; and that He must be intimately acquainted with the operations and progress of the internal machinery, and consequent outward deportment, of this creature which He has made: these are, I think, self-evident propositions. That there is a real and eternal distinction between virtue and vice, and, consequently, that I am an accountable creature; that from the seeming nature of the human mind, as well as from the evident imperfection, nay, positive injustice, in the administration of affairs, both in the natural and moral worlds, there must be a retributive scene of existence beyond the grave; must, I think, be allowed by every one who will give himself a moment's reflection. I will go farther, and affirm, that from the sublimity, excellence, and purity of His doctrine and precepts, unparalleled by all the

aggregated wisdom and learning of many preceding ages, though, *to appearance*, He Himself was the obscurest and most illiterate of our species—therefore Jesus Christ was from God. . . .

Whatever mitigates the woes, or increases the happiness, of others, this is my criterion of goodness; and whatever injures society at large, or any individual in it, this is my measure of iniquity.

What think you, Madam, of my creed? I trust that I have said nothing that will lessen me in the eye of one whose good opinion I value almost next to the approbation of my own mind.—R. B.

to be taken, any copy of the ballad. If I could be of any service to Dr. M'Gill, I would do it, though it should be at a much greater expense than irritating a few bigoted priests; but I am afraid serving him in his present *embarras* is a task too hard for me. I have enemies enow, God knows, though I do not wantonly add to the number. Still, as I think there is some merit in two or three of the thoughts, I send it to you as a small but sincere testimony how much, and with what respectful esteem,

I am, dear Sir,
Your obliged humble Servant,
R. B.

CXLVIII.

TO JOHN LOGAN, ESQ.,
OF KNOCKSHINNOCH.

ELLISLAND, near Dumfries,
7th Aug. 1789.

DEAR SIR,

I intended to have written you long ere now, and, as I told you, I had gotten three stanzas and a half on my way in a poetic epistle to you; but that old enemy of all *good works*, the devil, threw me into a prosaic mire, and for the soul of me I cannot get out of it. I dare not write you a long letter, as I am going, to intrude on your time with a long ballad. I have, as you will shortly see, finished "The Kirk's Alarm;" but now that it is done, and that I have laughed once or twice at the conceits in some of the stanzas, I am determined not to let it get into the public: so I send you this copy, the first that I have sent to Ayrshire, except some few of the stanzas, which I wrote off in embryo for Gavin Hamilton, under the express provision and request that you will only read it to a few of us, and do not on any account give, or permit

CXLIX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

ELLISLAND, 6th Sept. 1789.

DEAR MADAM,

I have mentioned in my last my appointment to the Excise and the birth of little Frank; who, by the by, I trust will be no discredit to the honourable name of Wallace, as he has a fine manly countenance, and a figure that might do credit to a little fellow two months older, and likewise an excellent good temper, though when he pleases he has a pipe only not quite so loud as the horn that his immortal namesake blew as a signal to take out the pin of Stirling bridge.

I had some time ago an epistle, part poetic, and part prosaic, from your poetess, Mrs. J. Little, a very ingenious but modest composition. I should have written her as she requested, but for the hurry of this new business. I have heard of her and her compositions in this country; and I am happy to add, always to the honour of her character. The fact is, I know not well how to write to her: I should sit down to a sheet of paper that I knew not how to

stain. I am no dab at fine-drawn letter-writing; and, except when prompted by friendship or gratitude, or, which happens extremely rarely, inspired by the Muse (I know not her name) that presides over epistolary writing, I sit down, when necessitated to write, as I would sit down to beat hemp.

Some parts of your letter of the 20th August struck me with the most melancholy concern for the state of your mind at present. . . .

Would I could write you a letter of comfort! I would sit down to it with as much pleasure as I would to write an epic poem of my own composition that should equal the "Iliad." Religion, my dear friend, is the true comfort! A strong persuasion in a future state of existence; a proposition so obviously probable, that, setting revelation aside, every nation and people, so far as investigation has reached, for at least near four thousand years, have in some mode or other firmly believed it. In vain would we reason and pretend to doubt. I have myself done so to a very daring pitch; but when I reflected that I was opposing the most ardent wishes and the most darling hopes of good men, and flying in the face of all human belief, in all ages, I was shocked at my own conduct.

I know not whether I have ever sent you the following lines, or if you have ever seen them; but it is one of my favourite quotations, which I keep constantly by me in my progress through life, in the language of the book of Job,

"Against the day of battle and of war"—

spoken of religion :

"Tis *this*, my friend, that streaks our morning bright :

'Tis *this* that gilds the horror of our night :

When wealth forsakes us, and when friends are few,

When friends are faithless, or when foes pursue,

'Tis *this* that wards the blow, or stills the smart,
Disarms affliction, or repels his dart;
Within the breast bids purest raptures rise,
Bids smiling conscience spread her cloudless skies."

I have been busy with "Zeluco." The Doctor is so obliging as to request my opinion of it: and I have been revolving in my mind some kind of criticisms on novel-writing; but it is a depth beyond my research. I shall however digest my thoughts on the subject as well as I can. "Zeluco" is a most sterling performance.

Farewell! *A Dieu, le bon Dieu, je vous commende!*—R. B.

CL.

TO CAPTAIN RIDDELL,
OF FRIARS CARSE.

ELLISLAND, 16th Oct. 1789.

SIR,

Big with the idea of this important day at Friars Carse, I have watched the elements and skies in the full persuasion that they would announce it to the astonished world by some phenomena of terrific portent. Yesternight until a very late hour did I wait with anxious horror for the appearance of some comet firing half the sky, or aerial armies of sanguinary Scandinavians, darting athwart the startled heavens, rapid as the ragged lightning, and horrid as those convulsions of nature that bury nations.

The elements, however, seem to take the matter very quietly: they did not even usher in this morning with triple suns and a shower of blood, symbolical of the three potent heroes and the mighty claret-shed of the day. For me, as Thomson in his "Winter" says of the storm, I shall "hear astonished, and astonished sing"

The whistle and the man; I sing
The man that won the whistle, &c.

Here are we met, three merry boys;
 Three merry boys I trow are we;
 And mony a night we've merry been,
 And mony mae we hope to be.

Wha first shall rise to gang awa,
 A' chead cowart loir's he
 Wha last beside his chair shall fa',
 He is the king amang us three.

To leave the heights of Parnassus and come to the humble vale of prose—I have some misgivings that I take too much upon me, when I request you to get your guest, Sir Robert Lawrie, to frank the two enclosed covers for me; the one of them to Sir William Cunningham of Robertland, Bart., at Kilmarnock; the other to Mr. Allan Masterton, Writing-Master, Edinburgh. The first has a kindred claim on Sir Robert, as being a brother baronet, and likewise a keen Foxite; the other is one of the worthiest men in the world, and a man of real genius; so, allow me to say, he has a fraternal claim on you. I want them franked for to-morrow, as I cannot get them to the post to-night. I shall send a servant again for them in the evening. Wishing that your head may be crowned with laurels to-night, and free from aches to-morrow,

I have the honour to be, Sir,
 your deeply indebted humble Servant,
 R. B.

CLI.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE,
 EDINBURGH.

ELLISLAND, 1st November, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I had written you long ere now, could I have guessed where to find you; for I am sure you have more good sense than to waste the precious days of vacation time in the dirt of business and Edinburgh. Wherever you are, God bless you, and lead you not into temptation, but deliver you from evil!

I do not know if I have informed you that I am now appointed to an Excise division, in the middle of which my house and farm lie. In this I was extremely lucky. Without ever having been an expectant, as they call their journeymen excisemen, I was directly planted down to all intents and purposes an officer of Excise, there to flourish and bring forth fruits—worthy of repentance.

I know not how the word exciseman, or, still more opprobrious, gauger, will sound in your ears. I too have seen the day, when my auditory nerves would have felt very delicately on this subject; but a wife and children are things which have a wonderful power in blunting these kind of sensations. Fifty pounds a year for life, and a provision for widows and orphans, you will allow is no bad settlement for a poet. For the ignominy of the profession, I have the encouragement which I once heard a recruiting serjeant give to a numerous, if not a respectable, audience, in the streets of Kilmarnock: "Gentlemen, for your further and better encouragement, I can assure you that our regiment is the most blackguard corps under the crown, and, consequently, with us an honest fellow has the surest chance for preferment."

You need not doubt that I find several very unpleasant and disagreeable circumstances in my business; but I am tired with and disgusted at the language of complaint against the evils of life. Human existence in the most favourable situations does not abound with pleasures, and has its inconveniences and ills: capricious, foolish man mistakes these inconveniences and ills, as if they were the peculiar property of his particular situation; and hence that eternal fickleness, that love of change, which has ruined, and daily does ruin, many a fine fellow, as well as many a blockhead, and is, almost

without exception, a constant source of disappointment and misery.

I long to hear from you how you go on—not so much in business, as in life. Are you pretty well satisfied with your own exertions, and tolerably at ease in your internal reflections? 'Tis much to be a great character as a lawyer, but beyond comparison more to be a great character as a man. That you may be both the one and the other is the earnest wish, and that you *will* be both is the firm persuasion, of,

My dear Sir, &c.

R. B.

CLII.

TO MR. RICHARD BROWN,

PORT GLASGOW.

ELLISLAND, 4th November, 1789.

I HAVE been so hurried, my ever dear friend, that though I got both your letters, I have not been able to command an hour to answer them as I wished; and even now you are to look on this as merely confessing debt, and craving days. Few things could have given me so much pleasure as the news that you were once more safe and sound on terra firma, and happy in that place where happiness is alone to be found, in the fireside circle. May the benevolent Director of all things peculiarly bless you in all those endearing connexions consequent on the tender and venerable names of husband and father! I have indeed been extremely lucky in getting an additional income of £50 a year, while, at the same time, the appointment will not cost me above £10 or £12 per annum of expenses more than I must have inevitably incurred. The worst circumstance is, that the Excise division which I have got is so extensive—no less than ten parishes to ride over; and it abounds besides with so much business, that I can scarcely steal a

spare moment. However, labour endears rest, and both together are absolutely necessary for the proper enjoyment of human existence. I cannot meet you anywhere. No less than an order from the Board of Excise, at Edinburgh, is necessary before I can have so much time as to meet you in Ayrshire. But do you come and see me. We must have a social day, and perhaps lengthen it out with half the night, before you go again to sea. You are the earliest friend I now have on earth, my brothers excepted; and is not that an endearing circumstance? When you and I first met, we were at the green period of human life. The twig would easily take a bent, but would as easily return to its former state. You and I not only took a mutual bent, but by the melancholy, though strong, influence of being both of the family of the unfortunate, we were entwined with one another in our growth towards advanced age; and blasted be the sacrilegious hand that shall attempt to undo the union! You and I must have one bumper to my favourite toast, "May the companions of our youth be the friends of our old age!" Come and see me one year; I shall see you at Port Glasgow the next: and if we can contrive to have a gossiping between our two bedfellows, it will be so much additional pleasure. Mrs. Burns joins me in kind compliments to you and Mrs. Brown. Adieu!

I am ever, my dear Sir, yours,
R. B.

CLIII.

TO LADY GLENCAIRN.

ELLISLAND [Dec. 1789.]

MY LADY,

The honour you have done your poor poet, in writing him so very obliging a letter, and the

pleasure the enclosed beautiful verses have given him, came very seasonably to his aid amid the cheerless gloom and sinking despondency of diseased nerves and December weather. As to forgetting the family of Glencairn, Heaven is my witness with what sincerity I could use those old verses, which please me more in their rude simplicity than the most elegant lines I ever saw :—

“If thee, Jerusalem, I forget,
Skill part from my right hand.

My tongue to my mouth's roof let cleave,
If I do thee forget,
Jerusalem, and thee above
My chief joy do not set.”

When I am tempted to do anything improper, I dare not, because I look on myself as accountable to your ladyship and family. Now and then, when I have the honour to be called to the tables of the great, if I happen to meet with any mortification from the stately stupidity of self-sufficient squires or the luxurious insolence of upstart nabobs, I get above the creatures by calling to remembrance that I am patronised by the noble house of Glencairn; and at gala-times, such as New-year's day, a christening, or the Kirm-night, when my punch-bowl is brought from its dusty corner and filled up in honour of the occasion, I begin with, “The Countess of Glencairn!” My good woman, with the enthusiasm of a grateful heart, next cries, “My Lord!” and so the toast goes on until I end with “Lady Harriet's little angel!” whose epithalamium I have pledged myself to write.

When I received your ladyship's letter, I was just in the act of transcribing for you some verses I have lately composed; and meant to have sent them my first leisure hour, and acquainted you with my late change of life. I mentioned to my lord my

fears concerning my farm. Those fears were indeed too true: it is a bargain that would have ruined me but for the lucky circumstance of my having an Excise commission.

People may talk as they please of the ignominy of the Excise; £50 a year will support my wife and children, and keep me independent of the world; and I would much rather have it said that my profession borrowed credit from me, than that I borrowed credit from my profession. Another advantage I have in this business is the knowledge it gives me of the various shades of human character, consequently assisting me vastly in my poetic pursuits. I had the most ardent enthusiasm for the Muses when nobody knew me but myself, and that ardour is by no means cooled now that my Lord Glencairn's goodness has introduced me to all the world. Not that I am in haste for the press. I have no idea of publishing, else I certainly had consulted my noble, generous patron; but after acting the part of an honest man, and supporting my family, my whole wishes and views are directed to poetic pursuits. I am aware, that though I were to give performances to the world superior to my former works, still, if they were of the same kind with those, the comparative reception they would meet with would mortify me. I have turned my thoughts on the drama. I do not mean the stately buskin of the tragic Muse.

Does not your ladyship think that an Edinburgh theatre would be more amused with affectation, folly, and whim of true Scottish growth, than manners which by far the greatest part of the audience can only know at second-hand?

I have the honour to be,
Your ladyship's ever-devoted and
grateful humble Servant,

R. B.

CLIV.

TO MR. PETER STUART,

LONDON.

— 1789.

MY DEAR SIR,

The hurry of a farmer in this particular season and the indolence of a poet at all times and seasons will, I hope, plead my excuse for neglecting so long to answer your obliging letter of the 5th of August. . . .

When I received your letter I was transcribing for [the *Star*] my letter to the magistrates of the Canongate, Edinburgh, begging their permission to place a tombstone over poor Fergusson, and their edict in consequence of my petition; but now I shall send them to * * * *. Poor Fergusson! If there be a life beyond the grave, which I trust there is; and if there be a good God presiding over all nature, which I am sure there is; thou art now enjoying existence in a glorious world, where worth of the heart alone is distinction in the man; where riches, deprived of all their pleasure-purchasing powers, return to their native sordid matter; where titles and honours are the disregarded reveries of an idle dream; and where that heavy virtue, which is the negative consequence of steady dulness, and those thoughtless, though often destructive, follies which are the unavoidable aberrations of frail human nature, will be thrown into equal oblivion, as if they had never been!

Adieu, my dear Sir! So soon as your present views and schemes are concentrated in an aim, I shall be glad to hear from you, as your welfare and happiness is by no means a subject indifferent to

Yours,
R. B.

CLV.

TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ.

OF FINTRY.

9th December, 1789.

SIR,

I have a good while had a wish to trouble you with a letter, and had certainly done it long ere now, but for a humiliating something that throws cold water on the resolution, as if one should say, "You have found Mr. Graham a very powerful and kind friend indeed, and that interest he is so kindly taking in your concerns, you ought by everything in your power to keep alive and cherish." Now, though since God has thought proper to make one powerful and another helpless, the connexion of obliger and obliged is all fair; and though my business under your patronage is to me highly honourable, yet, Sir, allow me to flatter myself, that as a poet and an honest man you first interested yourself in my welfare, and principally as such still you permit me to approach you.

I have found the Excise business go on a great deal smoother with me than I expected; owing a good deal to the generous friendship of Mr. Mitchell, my collector, and the kind assistance of Mr. Findlater, my supervisor. I dare to be honest, and I fear no labour. Nor do I find my hurried life greatly inimical to my correspondence with the Muses. Their visits to me, indeed, and I believe to most of their acquaintance, like the visits of good angels, are short and far between; but I meet them now and then as I jog through the hills of Nithsdale, just as I used to do on the banks of Ayr. I take the liberty to enclose you a few bagatelles, all of them the productions of my leisure thoughts in my Excise rides.

If you know or have ever seen Captain Grose, the antiquarian,

you will enter into any humour that is in the verses on him. Perhaps you have seen them before, as I sent them to a London newspaper. Though I dare say you have none of the solemn-league-and-covenant fire which shone so conspicuous in Lord George Gordon and the Kilmarnock weavers, yet I think you must have heard of Dr. McGill, one of the clergymen of Ayr, and his heretical book. God help him, poor man! Though he is one of the worthiest, as well as one of the ablest, of the whole priesthood of the Kirk of Scotland, in every sense of that ambiguous term, yet the poor Doctor and his numerous family are in imminent danger of being thrown out to the mercy of the winter winds. The enclosed ballad on that business is, I confess, too local; but I laughed myself at some conceits in it, though I am convinced in my conscience that there are a good many heavy stanzas in it too.

The election ballad, as you will see, alludes to the present canvass in our string of burghs. I do not believe there will be such a harder-run match in the whole general election. . . .

I am too little a man to have any political attachments; I am deeply indebted to, and have the warmest veneration for, individuals of both parties; but a man who has it in his power to be the father of a country, and who is only known to that country by the mischiefs he does in it, is a character that one cannot speak of with patience.

Sir James Johnston does "what man can do," but yet I doubt his fate. . . . R. B.

CLVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

ELLISLAND, 13th December, 1789.

MANY thanks, dear Madam, for your sheet-full of rhymes. Though

at present I am below the veriest prose, yet from you everything pleases. I am groaning under the miseries of a diseased nervous system—a system, the state of which is most conducive to our happiness, or the most productive of our misery. For now near three weeks I have been so ill with a nervous headache, that I have been obliged for a time to give up my Excise-books, being scarce able to lift my head, much less to ride once a week over ten muir parishes. What is man?—To-day, in the luxuriance of health, exulting in the enjoyments of existence; in a few days, perhaps in a few hours, loaded with conscious painful being, counting the tardy pace of the lingering moments by the repercussions of anguish, and refusing or denied a comforter. Day follows night, and night comes after day, only to curse him with life which gives him no pleasure; and yet the awful, dark termination of that life is something at which he recoils.

"Tell us, ye dead, will none of you in pity
Disclose the secret—
What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be?
—'tis no matter:

A little time will make us learned as you are
and as close."

Can it be possible, that when I resign this frail, feverish being, I shall still find myself in conscious existence? When the last gasp of agony has announced that I am no more to those that knew me, and the few who loved me; when the cold, stiffened, unconscious, ghastly corse is resigned into the earth, to be the prey of unsightly reptiles, and to become in time a trodden clod, shall I be yet warm in life, seeing and seen, enjoying and enjoyed? Ye venerable sages and holy flames, is there probability in your conjectures, truth in your stories, of another world beyond death; or are they all alike, baseless visions and fabricated fables? If there is another life, it

must be only for the just, the benevolent, the amiable, and the humane: what a flattering idea, then, is a world to come! Would to God I as firmly believed it, as I ardently wish it! There I shall meet an aged parent, now at rest from the many buffetings of an evil world, against which he so long and bravely struggled. There should I meet the friend, the disinterested friend, of my early life; the man who rejoiced to see me, because he loved me and could serve me. Muir, thy weaknesses were the aberrations of human nature, but thy heart glowed with everything generous, manly, and noble; and if ever emanation from the All-good Being animated a human form, it was thine! There should I, with speechless agony of rapture, again recognise my lost, my ever dear Mary! whose bosom was fraught with truth, honour, constancy, and love.

"My Mary, dear departed shade
Where is thy place of heavenly rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his
breast?"

Jesus Christ, thou amiablest of characters! I trust thou art no impostor, and that Thy revelation of blissful scenes of existence beyond death and the grave is not one of the many impositions, which time after time have been palmed on credulous mankind. I trust that in Thee "shall all the families of the earth be blessed," by being yet connected together in a better world, where every tie that bound heart to heart in this state of existence shall be, far beyond our present conceptions, more endearing.

I am a good deal inclined to think with those who maintain, that what are called nervous affections are in fact diseases of the mind. I cannot reason, I cannot think; and, but to you, I would not venture to write anything above an order to a cobbler.

You have felt too much of the ills of life not to sympathise with a diseased wretch, who has impaired more than half of any faculties he possessed. Your goodness will excuse this distracted scrawl, which the writer dare scarcely read, and which he would throw into the fire, were he able to write anything better, or indeed anything at all.

Rumour told me something of a son of yours, who was returned from the East or West Indies. If you have gotten news from James or Anthony, it was cruel in you not to let me know; as I promise you, on the sincerity of a man who is weary of one world, and anxious about another, that scarce anything could give me so much pleasure as to hear of any good thing befalling my honoured friend.

If you have a minute's leisure, take up your pen in pity to *le pauvre miserable*.—R. B.

CLVII.

TO LADY WINIFRED
MAXWELL CONSTABLE.

ELLISLAND, 16th Dec. 1789.

. . . To court the notice or the tables of the great, except where I sometimes have had a little matter to ask of them, or more often the pleasanter task of witnessing my gratitude to them, is what I have never done, and I trust never shall do. But with your ladyship I have the honour to be connected by one of the strongest and most endearing ties in the whole moral world; common sufferings in a cause where even to be unfortunate is glorious—the cause of heroic loyalty! Though my fathers had not illustrious honours and vast properties to hazard in the contest, though they left their humble cottages only to add so many units more to the unnoted crowd that followed their

leaders, yet what they could they did, and what they had they lost: with unshaken firmness and unconcealed political attachments, they shook hands with ruin for what they esteemed the cause of their king and their country. This language and the enclosed verses [addressed to Mr. William Tytler] are for your ladyship's eyes alone. Poets are not very famous for their prudence; but as I can do nothing for a cause which is now nearly no more, I do not wish to hurt myself.—R. B.

CLVIII.

TO PROVOST MAXWELL,

OF LOCHMABEN.

ELLISLAND, 20th Dec. 1789.

DEAR PROVOST.—As my friend Mr. Graham goes for your good town to-morrow, I cannot resist the temptation to send you a few lines; and as I have nothing to say, I have chosen this sheet of foolscap, and begun, as you see, at the top of the first page, because I have ever observed that when once people have fairly set out, they know not where to stop. Now that my first sentence is concluded, I have nothing to do but to pray Heaven to help me on to another. Shall I write you on politics, or religion?—two master-subjects for your sayers of nothing. Of the first, I dare say by this time you are nearly surfeited; and for the last, whatever they may talk of it who make it a kind of company concern, I never could endure it beyond a soliloquy. I might write you on farming, on building, on marketing; but my poor distracted mind is so torn, so jaded, so racked and bedeviled with the task of the superlatively damned, to make *one guinea do the business of three*, that I detest, abhor, and swoon at the very word “business,” though no

less than four letters of my very short surname are in it.

Well, to make a matter short, I shall betake myself to a subject ever fruitful of themes—a subject, the turtle feast of the sons of Satan, and the delicious sugar-plum of the babes of grace—a subject sparkling with all the jewels that it can find in the mines of Genius, and pregnant with all the stores of learning, from Moses and Confucius to Franklin and Priestly—in short, may it please your Lordship, I intend to write

If at any time you expect a field-day in your town—a day when Dukes, Earls, and Knights pay their court to weavers, tailors, and cobblers, I should like to know of it two or three days beforehand. It is not that I care three skips of a cur-dog for the politics, but I should like to see such an exhibition of human nature. If you meet with that worthy old veteran in Religion and good-fellowship, Mr. Jeffrey, or any of his amiable family, I beg you will give them my best compliments.

R. B.

CLIX.

TO MR. GILBERT BURNS.

ELLISLAND, 11th January, 1790.

DEAR BROTHER,

I mean to take advantage of the frank, though I have not in my present frame of mind much appetite for exertion in writing. My nerves are in a cursed state. I feel that horrid hypochondria pervading every atom of both body and soul. This farm has undone my enjoyment of myself. It is a ruinous affair on all hands. But let it go to hell! I'll fight it out and be off with it.

We have gotten a set of very decent players here just now. I have seen them an evening or two. David Campbell, in Ayr, wrote to

me by the manager of the company, a Mr. Sutherland, who is a man of apparent worth. On New-year-day evening I gave him the following prologue, which he spouted to his audience with applause:—

No song nor dance I bring from yon great city,
That queens it o'er our taste—the more's the pity:
Tho', by the by, abroad why will you roam?
Good sense and taste are natives here at home.

I can no more.—If once I am clear
of this curst farm, I should respire
more at my ease.—R. B.

CLX.

TO

MR. WILLIAM DUNBAR, W.S.,
EDINBURGH.

ELLISLAND, 14th January, 1790.

SINCE we are here creatures of a day, since a "few summer days, and a few winter nights, and the life of man is at an end," why, my dear, much-esteemed Sir, should you and I let negligent indolence—for I know it is nothing worse—step in between us, and bar the enjoyment of a mutual correspondence? We are not shapen out of the common, heavy, methodical clod, the elemental stuff of the plodding, selfish race, the sons of Arithmetic and Prudence; our feelings and hearts are not benumbed and poisoned by the cursed influence of riches, which, whatever blessing there may be in other respects, are no friends to the nobler qualities of the heart; in the name of random sensibility, then, let never the moon change on our silence any more. I have had a tract of bad health most part of this winter, else you had heard from me long ere now. Thank Heaven, I am now got so much better as to be able to partake a little in the enjoyments of life.

Our friend Cunningham will perhaps have told you of my going into the Excise. The truth is, I

found it a very convenient business to have £50 per annum, nor have I yet felt any of those mortifying circumstances in it that I was led to fear.

Feb. 2.

I HAVE not, for sheer hurry of business, been able to spare five minutes to finish my letter. Besides my farm business, I ride on my Excise matters at least 200 miles every week. I have not by any means given up the Muses. You will see in the third vol. of Johnson's "Scots Songs" that I have contributed my mite there.

But, my dear Sir, little ones that look up to you for parental protection are an important charge. I have already two fine, healthy, stout little fellows, and I wish to throw some light upon them. I have a thousand reveries and schemes about them and their future destiny—not that I am a Utopian projector in these things. I am resolved never to breed up a son of mine to any of the learned professions. I know the value of independence, and since I cannot give my sons an independent fortune, I shall give them an independent line of life. What a chaos of hurry, chance, and changes is this world, when one sits soberly down to reflect on it! To a father, who himself knows the world, the thought that he will have sons to usher into it must fill him with dread; but if he have daughters, the prospect to a thoughtful man is apt to shock him.

I hope Mrs. Fordyce and the two young ladies are well. Do let me forget that they are nieces of yours, and let me say that I never saw a more interesting, sweeter pair of sisters in my life. I am the fool of my feelings and attachments. I often take up a volume of my Spenser [which Mr. Dunbar had presented to him] to realise you to my imagination, and think over

those social scenes we have had together. God grant that there may be another world more congenial to honest fellows beyond this; a world where these rubs and plagues of absence, distance, misfortunes, ill-health, &c. shall no more damp hilarity, and divide friendship.

This I know is your throng season, but half a page will much oblige, my dear Sir, yours sincerely,

R. B.

CLXI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

ELLISLAND, 25th January, 1790.

It has been owing to unremitting hurry of business that I have not written to you, Madam, long ere now. My health is greatly better, and I now begin once more to share in satisfaction and enjoyment with the rest of my fellow-creatures.

Many thanks, my much esteemed friend, for your kind letters: but why will you make me run the risk of being contemptible and mercenary in my own eyes? When I pique myself on my independent spirit, I hope it is neither poetic licence, nor poetic rant; and I am so flattered with the honour you have done me, in making me your compeer in friendship and friendly correspondence, that I cannot without pain, and a degree of mortification, be reminded of the real inequality between our situations.

Most sincerely do I rejoice with you, dear Madam, in the good news of Anthony. Not only your anxiety about his fate, but my own esteem for such a noble, warm-hearted, manly young fellow in the little I had of his acquaintance, has interested me deeply in his fortunes.

Falconer, the unfortunate author of the "Shipwreck," which you so much admire, is no more. After witnessing the dreadful catastrophe

he so feelingly describes in his poem, and after weathering many hard gales of fortune, he went to the bottom with the "Aurora" frigate!

I forget what part of Scotland had the honour of giving him birth; but he was the son of obscurity and misfortune. He was one of those daring adventurous spirits which Scotland, beyond any other country, is remarkable for producing. Little does the fond mother think, as she hangs delighted over the sweet little leech at her bosom, where the poor fellow may hereafter wander, and what may be his fate. I remember a stanza in an old Scottish ballad, which, notwithstanding its rude simplicity, speaks feelingly to the heart:—

"Little did my mother think,
That day she cradled me,
What land I was to travel in,
Or what death I should die!"

Old Scottish songs are, you know, a favourite study and pursuit of mine; and now I am on that subject, allow me to give you two stanzas of another old simple ballad, which I am sure will please you. The catastrophe of the piece is a poor ruined female, lamenting her fate. She concludes with this pathetic wish:—

"O that my father had ne'er on me smil'd!
O that my mother had ne'er to me sung!
O that my cradle had never been rock'd;
But that I had died when I was young!
O that the grave it were my bed,
My blankets were my winding sheet;
The clocks and the worms my bedfellows a';
And O sae sound as I should sleep!"

I do not remember, in all my reading, to have met with anything more truly the language of misery than the exclamation in the last line. Misery is like love; to speak its language truly, the author must have felt it.

I am every day expecting the doctor to give your little godson the small-pox. They are *rife* in the country, and I tremble for his fate.

By the way, I cannot help congratulating you on his looks and spirit. Every person who sees him, acknowledges him to be the finest, handsomest child he has ever seen. I am myself delighted with the manly swell of his little chest, and a certain miniature dignity in the carriage of his head, and the glance of his fine black eye, which promise the undaunted gallantry of an independent mind.

I thought to have sent you some rhymes, but time forbids. I promise you poetry until you are tired of it next time I have the honour of assuring you how truly I am, &c.—R. B.

CLXII.

TO MR. PETER HILL,

BOOKSELLER, EDINBURGH.

ELLISLAND, *2nd Feb. 1790.*

No! I will not say one word about apologies or excuses for not writing; I am a poor, rascally gauger, condemned to gallop at least 200 miles every week to inspect dirty ponds and yeasty barrels, and where can I find time to write to, or importance to interest, anybody? The upbraidings of my conscience, nay, the upbraidings of my wife, have persecuted me on your account these two or three months past. I wish to God I was a great man, that my correspondence might throw light upon you, to let the world see what you really are; and then I would make your fortune, without putting my hand in my pocket for you, which, like all other great men, I suppose I would avoid as much as possible. What are you doing, and how are you doing? Have you lately seen any of my few friends? What has become of the Borough Reform, or how is the fate of my poor namesake Mademoiselle Burns decided? . . . O man! but for thee, and thy selfish appetites and dis-

honest artifices, that beauteous form, and that once innocent and still ingenuous mind, might have shone conspicuous and lovely in the faithful wife and the affectionate mother; and shall the unfortunate sacrifice to thy pleasures have no claim on thy humanity? . . .

I saw lately in a Review some extracts from a new poem called "The Village Curate:" send it me. I want likewise a cheap copy of "The World." Mr. Armstrong, the young poet, who does me the honour to mention me so kindly in his works, please give him my best thanks for the copy of his book: I shall write him my first leisure hour. I like his poetry much, but I think his style in prose quite astonishing. . . .—R. B.

CLXIII.

TO MR. WILLIAM NICOL,

EDINBURGH.

ELLISLAND, *Feb. 9, 1790.*

MY DEAR SIR,

That d-mned mare of yours is dead. I would freely have given her price to have saved her; she has vexed me beyond description. Indebted as I was to your goodness beyond what I can ever repay, I eagerly grasped at your offer to have the mare with me. That I might at least show my readiness in wishing to be grateful, I took every care of her in my power. She was never crossed for riding above half a score of times by me or in my keeping. I drew her in the plough, one of three, for one poor week. I refused fifty-five shillings for her, which was the highest bode I could squeeze for her. I fed her up and had her in fine order for Dumfries fair, when, four or five days before the fair, she was seized with an unaccountable disorder in the sinews, or somewhere in the bones of the neck; with a

weakness or total want of power in her fillets; and, in short, the whole vertebrae of her spine seemed to be diseased and unhinged; and in eight and forty hours, in spite of the two best farriers in the country, she died—and be d-mned to her! The farriers said that she had been quite strained in the fillets beyond cure before you had bought her; and that the poor devil, though she might keep a little flesh, had been jaded and quite worn out with fatigue and oppression. While she was with me, she was under my own eye: and I assure you, my much valued friend, everything was done for her that could be done; and the accident has vexed me to the heart. In fact, I could not pluck up spirits to write to you on account of the unfortunate business.

There is little new in this country. Our theatrical company, of which you must have heard, leave us this week. Their merit and character are indeed very great, both on the stage and in private life; not a worthless creature among them; and their encouragement has been accordingly. Their usual run is from eighteen to twenty-five pounds a night: seldom less than the one, and the house will hold no more than the other. There have been repeated instances of sending away six, and eight, and ten pounds a night for want of room. A new theatre is to be built by subscription: the first stone is to be laid on Friday first to come. Three hundred guineas have been raised by thirty subscribers, and thirty more might have been got if wanted. The manager, Mr. Sutherland, was introduced to me by a friend from Ayr; and a worthier or cleverer fellow I have rarely met with. Some of our clergy have slipped in by stealth now and then; but they have got up a farce of their own. You must have heard how the Rev. Mr.

Lawson of Kirkmahoe, seconded by the Rev. Mr. Kirkpatrick of Dunscore, and the rest of that faction, have accused in formal process the unfortunate and Rev. Mr. Heron of Kirkgunzeon, that in ordaining Mr. Neilson to the cure of souls in Kirkbean he, the said Heron, feloniously and treasonably bound the said Neilson to the Confession of Faith, *so far as it was agreeable to reason and the Word of God!*

Mrs. B. begs to be remembered most gratefully to you. Little Bobby and Frank are charmingly well and healthy. I am jaded to death with fatigue. For these two or three months, on an average, I have not ridden less than two hundred miles per week. I have done little in the poetic way: I have given Mr. Sutherland two prologues; one of which was delivered last week. I have likewise strung four or five barbarous stanzas, to the tune of Chevy Chase, by way of Elegy on your poor unfortunate mare, beginning (the name she got here was Peg Nicholson):

"Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
As ever trod on air;
But now she's floating down the Nith,
And past the mouth o' Cairn"—&c.

My best compliments to Mrs. Nicol, and little Neddy, and all the family. I hope Ned is a good scholar, and will come out to gather nuts and apples with me next harvest.—R. B.

CLXIV.

TO

MR. ALEX. CUNNINGHAM,
WRITER, EDINBURGH.

ELLISLAND, 13th February, 1790.

I BEG your pardon, my dear and much valued friend, for writing to you on this very unfashionable, unsightly sheet—

"My poverty, but not my will, consents."

But to make amends, since of modish post I have none, except one poor widowed half-sheet of gilt, which lies in my drawer among my plebeian foolscap pages, like the widow of a man of fashion, whom that unpolite scoundrel, Necessity, has driven from Burgundy and Pineapple to a dish of Bohea, with the scandal-bearing helpmate of a village priest; or a glass of whisky-toddy, with a ruby-nosed yoke-fellow of a foot-padding exciseman; I make a vow to enclose this sheet-full of epistolary fragments in that my only scrap of gilt paper.

I am indeed your unworthy debtor for three friendly letters. I ought to have written to you long ere now; but it is a literal fact, I have scarcely a spare moment. It is not that I *will not* write to you; Miss Burnet is not more dear to her guardian angel, nor his Grace the Duke of Queensberry to the powers of darkness, than my friend Cunningham to me. It is not that I *cannot* write to you: should you doubt it, take the following fragment, which was intended for you some time ago, and be convinced that I can *antithesise* sentiment, and *circumvolve* periods, as well as any coiner of phrase in the regions of philology:—

December, 1789.

MY DEAR CUNNINGHAM,

Where are you? And what are you doing? Can you be that son of levity who takes up a friendship as he takes up a fashion? or are you, like some other of the worthiest fellows in the world, the victim of indolence, laden with fetters of ever-increasing weight?

What strange beings we are! Since we have a portion of conscious existence equally capable of enjoying pleasure, happiness, and rapture, or of suffering pain, wretchedness, and misery, it is surely worthy of an inquiry, whether there be not such

a thing as a science of life; whether method, economy, and fertility of expedients be not applicable to enjoyment; and whether there be not a want of dexterity in pleasure, which renders our little scantling of happiness still less, and a profuseness, an intoxication in bliss, which leads to satiety, disgust, and self-abhorrence. There is not a doubt but that health, talents, character, decent competency, respectable friends, are real substantial blessings; and yet do we not daily see those who enjoy many or all of these good things contrive, notwithstanding, to be as unhappy as others to whose lot few of them have fallen? I believe one great source of this mistake or misconduct is owing to a certain stimulus, with us called ambition, which goads us up the hill of life, not as we ascend other eminences, for the laudable curiosity of viewing an extended landscape, but rather for the dishonest pride of looking down on others of our fellow-creatures, seemingly diminutive in humbler stations, &c. &c.

Sunday, 14th February, 1790.

God help me! I am now obliged to

“Join night to day, and Sunday to the week.” If there be any truth in the orthodox faith of these churches, I am d-mned past redemption, and, what is worse, d-mned to all eternity. I am deeply read in Boston’s “Fourfold State,” Marshall on Sanctification, Guthrie’s “Trial of a Saving Interest,” &c.; but “there is no balm in Gilead, there is no physician there,” for me: so I shall e’en turn Arminian, and trust to “sincere though imperfect obedience.”

Tuesday, 16th.

LUCKILY for me, I was prevented from the discussion of the knotty point at which I had just made a full stop. All my fears and cares

are of this world : if there is another, an honest man has nothing to fear from it. I hate a man that wishes to be a Deist ; but I fear every fair, unprejudiced inquirer must in some degree be a Sceptic. It is not that there are any very staggering arguments against the immortality of man ; but, like electricity, phlogiston, &c., the subject is so involved in darkness, that we want data to go upon. One thing frightens me much : that we are to live for ever seems *too good news to be true*. That we are to enter into a new scene of existence, where, exempt from want and pain, we shall enjoy ourselves and our friends without satiety or separation—how much should I be indebted to any one who could fully assure me that this was certain ! . . .

My time is once more expired. I will write to Mr. Cleghorn soon. God bless him and all his concerns ! And may all the powers that preside over conviviality and friendship be present with all their kindest influence when the bearer of this, Mr. Syme, and you meet !—I wish I could also make one.

Finally, brethren, farewell ! Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are gentle, whatsoever things are charitable, whatsoever things are kind, think on these things, and think on

R. B.

CLXV.

TO MR. PETER HILL.

ELLISLAND, 2nd March, 1790.

. . . . In addition to the books I commissioned in my last, I want very much "An Index to the Excise Laws, or an Abridgement of all the Statutes now in force relative to the Excise," by Zellinger Symons : I want three copies of this book ; if it is now to be had, cheap or dear, get

it for me. An honest country neighbour of mine wants too a Family Bible, the larger the better, but second-handed, for he does not choose to give above ten shillings for the book. I want likewise for myself, as you can pick them up, second-handed or cheap, copies of Otway's Dramatic Works, Ben Jonson's, Dryden's, Congreve's, Wycherley's, Vanbrugh's, Cibber's, or any Dramatic Works of the more modern, Macklin, Garrick, Foote, Colman, or Sheridan. A good copy too of Molière, in French, I much want. Any other good dramatic authors in that language I want also ; but comic authors chiefly, though I should wish to have Racine, Corneille, and Voltaire too. I am in no hurry for all or any of these, but if you accidentally meet with them very cheap, get them for me.

And now, to quit the dry walk of business, how do you do, my dear friend ? and how is Mrs. Hill ? I trust, if now and then not so *elegantly* handsome, at least as amiable, and sings as divinely as ever. My good wife too has a charming "wood-note wild ;" now, could we four get any-way snugly together in a corner, in the New Jerusalem (remember, I bespeak your company there), you and I, though, Heaven knows, we are no singers ; yet, as we are all to have harps, you know, we shall continue to support the ladies' pipes, as we have oft done before, with all the powers of our instruments.

I am out of all patience with this vile world for one thing. Mankind are by nature benevolent creatures, except in a few scoundrelly instances. I do not think that avarice of the good things we chance to have is born with us ; but we are placed here amid so much nakedness, and hunger, and poverty, and want, that we are under a cursed necessity of studying selfishness, in order that

we may EXIST! Still there are, in every age, a few souls, that all the wants and woes of life cannot debase to selfishness, or even to the necessary alloy of caution and prudence. If ever I am in danger of vanity, it is when I contemplate myself on this side of my disposition and character. God knows I am no saint; I have a whole host of follies and sins to answer for; but if I could (and I believe I do it as far as I can) I would "wipe away all tears from all eyes." Adieu! R. B.

CLXVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

ELLISLAND, 10th April, 1790.

I HAVE just now, my ever honoured friend, enjoyed a very high luxury, in reading a paper of the "Lounger." You know my national prejudices. I have often read and admired the "Spectator," "Adventurer," "Rambler," and "World;" but still with a certain regret, that they were so thoroughly and entirely English. Alas! have I often said to myself, what are all the boasted advantages which my country reaps from the union, that can counterbalance the annihilation of her independence, and even her very name! I often repeat that couplet of my favourite poet, Goldsmith—

"——— States of native liberty possest,
Tho' very poor, may yet be very blest."

Nothing can reconcile me to the common terms, "English ambassador, English court," &c. And I am out of all patience to see that equivocal character, Hastings, impeached by "the Commons of England." Tell me, my friend, is this weak prejudice? I believe in my conscience such ideas as "my country; her independence; her honour; the illustrious names that

mark the history of my native land;" &c.—I believe these, among your *men of the world*, men who in fact guide for the most part and govern our world, are looked on as so many modifications of wrongheadedness. They know the use of bawling out such terms, to rouse or lead the rabble; but for their own private use, with almost all the *able statesmen* that ever existed, or now exist, when they talk of right and wrong, they only mean proper and improper; and their measure of conduct is, not what they ought, but what they dare. For the truth of this I shall not ransack the history of nations, but appeal to one of the ablest judges of man that ever lived—the celebrated Earl of Chesterfield. In fact, a man who could thoroughly control his vices whenever they interfered with his interests, and who could completely put on the appearance of every virtue as often as it suited his purposes, is, on the Stanhopian plan, the *perfect man*; a man to lead nations. But are great abilities complete without a flaw, and polished without a blemish, the standard of human excellence? This is certainly the staunch opinion of *men of the world*; but I call on honour, virtue, and worth, to give the Stygian doctrine a loud negative! However, this must be allowed, that, if you abstract from man the idea of an existence beyond the grave, *then* the true measure of human conduct is *proper and improper*: virtue and vice, as dispositions of the heart, are, in that case, of scarcely the same import and value to the world at large as harmony and discord in the modifications of sound; and a delicate sense of honour, like a nice ear for music, though it may sometimes give the possessor an ecstasy unknown to the coarser organs of the herd, yet, considering the harsh gratings and inharmonic jars in this ill-tuned state of being, it is odds but the

individual world be as happy, and certainly would be as much respected by the true judges of society, as it would then stand, without either a good ear or a good heart.

You must know I have just met with the "Mirror" and "Lounger" for the first time, and I am quite in raptures with them: I should be glad to have your opinion of some of the papers. The one I have just read, "Lounger," No. 61, has cost me more honest tears than anything I have read for a long time. Mackenzie has been called "the Addison of the Scots," and, in my opinion, Addison would not be hurt at the comparison. If he has not Addison's exquisite humour, he as certainly outdoes him in the tender and the pathetic. His "Man of Feeling" (but I am not counsel learned in the laws of criticism) I estimate as the first performance in its kind I ever saw. From what book, moral or even pious, will the susceptible young mind receive impressions more congenial to humanity and kindness, generosity and benevolence—in short, more of all that ennoble the soul to herself, or endears her to others—than from the simple affecting tale of poor Harley?

Still, with all my admiration of Mackenzie's writings, I do not know if they are the fittest reading for a young man who is about to set out, as the phrase is, to make his way into life. Do not you think, Madam, that among the few favoured of Heaven in the structure of their minds (for such there certainly are) there may be a purity, a tenderness, a dignity, an elegance of soul, which are of no use, nay, in some degree, absolutely disqualifying, for the truly important business of making a man's way into life? If I am not much mistaken, my gallant young friend Anthony is very much under these disqualifications: and for the

young females of a family I could mention, well may they excite parental solicitude; for I, a common acquaintance, or, as my vanity will have it, an humble friend, have often trembled for a turn of mind which may render them eminently happy—or peculiarly miserable!

I have been manufacturing some verses lately; but as I have got the most hurried season of Excise business over, I hope to have more leisure to transcribe anything that may show how much I have the honour to be, Madam,

Yours, &c.

R. B.

CLXVII.

TO DR. MOORE.

DUMFRIES, EXCISE-OFFICE,
14th July, 1790.

SIR,

Coming into town this morning to attend my duty in this office, it being collection-day, I met with a gentleman who tells me he is on his way to London; so I take the opportunity of writing to you, as franking is at present under a temporary death. I shall have some snatches of leisure through the day, amid our horrid business and bustle, and I shall improve them as well as I can; but let my letter be as stupid as * * * *, as miscellaneous as a newspaper, as short as a hungry grace-before-meat, or as long as a law-paper in the Douglas cause, as ill-spelt as country John's *billet-doux*, or as unsightly a scrawl as Betty Byre-Mucker's answer to it, I hope, considering circumstances, you will forgive it; and as it will put you to no expense of postage, I shall have the less reflection about it.

I am sadly ungrateful in not returning you my thanks for your most valuable present, "Zeluco." In fact, you are in some degree

blameable for my neglect. You were pleased to express a wish for my opinion of the work, which so flattered me, that nothing less would serve my over-weening fancy than a formal criticism on the book. In fact, I have gravely planned a comparative view of you, Fielding, Richardson, and Smollett, in your different qualities and merits as novel-writers. This, I own, betrays my ridiculous vanity, and I may probably never bring the business to bear; and I am fond of the spirit young Elihu shews in the book of Job—"And I said, I will also declare my opinion." I have quite disfigured my copy of the book with my annotations. I never take it up without at the same time taking my pencil, and marking with asterisms, parentheses, &c. wherever I meet with an original thought, a nervous remark on life and manners, a remarkably well-turned period, or a character sketched with uncommon precision.

Though I should hardly think of fairly writing out my "Comparative View," I shall certainly trouble you with my remarks, such as they are.

I have just received from my gentleman that horrid summons in the book of Revelation—"That time shall be no more!"

The little collection of sonnets [by Mrs. Charlotte Smith] have some charming poetry in them. If *indeed* I am indebted to the fair author for the book, and not, as I rather suspect, to a celebrated author of the other sex, I should certainly have written to the lady, with my grateful acknowledgments, and my own ideas of the comparative excellence of her pieces. I would do this last, not from any vanity of thinking that my remarks could be of much consequence to Mrs. Smith, but merely from my own feelings as an author, doing as I would be done by.—R. B.

CLXVIII.

TO MR. MURDOCH,

TEACHER OF FRENCH, LONDON.

ELLISLAND, *July 16th, 1790.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I received a letter from you a long time ago, but unfortunately, as it was in the time of my peregrinations and journeyings through Scotland, I mislaid or lost it, and, by consequence, your direction along with it. Luckily my good star brought me acquainted with Mr. Kennedy, who I understand is an acquaintance of yours; and by his means and mediation I hope to replace that link which my unfortunate negligence had so unluckily broke in the chain of our correspondence. I was the more vexed at the vile accident, as my brother William, a journeyman saddler, has been for some time in London; and wished above all things for your direction, that he might have paid his respects to his father's friend.

His last address he sent me was, "Wm. Burns, at Mr. Barber's, saddler, No. 181, Strand." I writ him by Mr. Kennedy, but neglected to ask him for your address; so, if you find a spare half-minute, please let my brother know by a card where and when he will find you, and the poor fellow will joyfully wait on you, as one of the few surviving friends of the man whose name, and Christian name too, he has the honour to bear.

The next letter I write you shall be a long one; I have much to tell you of "hair-breadth 'scapes in th' imminent deadly breach," with all the eventful history of a life, the early years of which owed so much to your kind tutorage; but this at an hour of leisure. My kindest compliments to Mrs. Murdoch and family.

I am ever, my dear Sir,
Your obliged friend,

R. B.

CLXIX.

TO MR. JOHN McMURDO,
DRUMLANRIG.

ELLISLAND, 2d August, 1790.

SIR,

Now that you are over with the sirens of Flattery, the harpies of Corruption, and the furies of Ambition, these infernal deities that on all sides, and in all parties, preside over the villanous business of Politics, permit a rustic muse of your acquaintance to do her best to sooth you with a song.

You knew Henderson—[Captain Matthew Henderson]—I have not flattered his memory.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obliged humble Servant,
R. B.

CLXX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

ELLISLAND, 8th August, 1790.

DEAR MADAM,

After a long day's toil, plague, and care, I sit down to write to you. Ask me not why I have delayed it so long. It was owing to hurry, indolence, and fifty other things; in short, to anything—but forgetfulness of *la plus aimable de son sexe*. By the by, you are indebted your best curtesy to me for this last compliment; as I pay it from my sincere conviction of its truth—a quality rather rare in compliments of these grinning, bowing, scraping times.

Well, I hope writing to you will ease a little my troubled soul. Soresly has it been bruised to-day! A *ci-devant* friend of mine, and an intimate acquaintance of yours, has given my feelings a wound that I perceive will gangrene dangerously ere it cure. He has wounded my pride!—R. B.

CLXXI.

TO
MR. ALEX. CUNNINGHAM.

ELLISLAND, 8th August, 1790.

FORGIVE me, my once dear, and ever dear friend, my seeming negligence. You cannot sit down and fancy the busy life I lead.

I laid down my goose-feather to beat my brains for an apt simile, and had some thoughts of a country grannum at a family christening; a bride on the market-day before her marriage; or a tavern-keeper at an election-dinner; but the resemblance that hits my fancy best is that black-guard miscreant Satan, who roams about like a roaring lion, seeking, *searching* whom he may devour. However, tossed about as I am, if I choose (and who would not choose?) to bind down with the crampets of Attention the brazen foundation of Integrity, I may rear up the superstructure of Independence, and from its daring turrets bid defiance to the storms of fate. And is not this a "consummation devoutly to be wished"?

"Thy spirit, Independence, let me share;
Lord of the lion-heart and eagle-eye!
Thy steps I follow with my bosom bare,
Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky!"

Are not these noble verses? They are the introduction of Smollett's Ode to Independence: if you have not seen the poem, I will send it to you. How wretched is the man that hangs on by the favours of the great! To shrink from every dignity of man at the approach of a lordly piece of self-consequence, who, amid all his tinsel, glitter and stately hauteur, is but a creature formed as thou art—and perhaps not so well formed as thou art—came into the world a puling infant as thou didst, and must go out of it as all men must, a naked corse . . . —R. B.

CLXXII.

TO DR. JAMES ANDERSON,
EDINBURGH.

[1790.]

SIR,

I am much indebted to my worthy friend Dr. Blacklock for introducing me to a gentleman of Dr. Anderson's celebrity; but when you do me the honour to ask my assistance in your proposed publication, alas, Sir! you might as well expect to cheapen a little honesty at the sign of an advocate's wig, or humility under the Geneva band. I am a miserable hurried devil, worn to the marrow in the friction of holding the noses of the poor publicans to the grindstone of the Excise! and, like Milton's Satan, for private reasons, am forced

"To do what yet tho' damn'd I would abhor;"

—and except a couplet or two of honest execration . . . —R. B.

CLXXIII.

TO COLLECTOR MITCHELL,
DUMFRIES.

ELLISLAND, 1790.

SIR,

I shall not fail to wait on Captain Riddel to-night—I wish and pray that the Goddess of Justice herself would appear to-morrow among our hon. gentlemen, merely to give them a word in their ear that mercy to the thief is injustice to the honest man. For my part, I have galloped over my ten parishes these four days, until this moment that I am just alighted, or, rather, that my poor jackass-skeleton of a horse has let me down, for the miserable devil has been on his knees half a score of times within the last twenty miles, telling me in his own way, "Behold, am not I thy faithful jade of a horse, on

which thou hast ridden these many years!"

In short, Sir, I have broke my own neck, and almost broke my horse's wind, and besides some injuries in a part that shall be nameless, owing to a hard-hearted stone of a saddle. I find that every offender has so many great men to espouse his cause, that I shall not be surprised if I am not committed to the stronghold of the law to-morrow for insolence to the dear friends of the gentlemen of the country.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obliged and obedient humble
R. B.

CLXXIV.

TO

CRAUFORD TAIT, ESQ., W.S.,
EDINBURGH.

ELLISLAND, 15th October, 1790.

DEAR SIR,

Allow me to introduce to your acquaintance the bearer, Mr. Wm. Duncan, a friend of mine, whom I have long known and long loved. His father, whose only son he is, has a decent little property in Ayrshire, and has bred the young man to the law, in which department he comes up an adventurer to your good town. I shall give you my friend's character in two words: as to his head, he has talents enough and more than enough, for common life: as to his heart, when Nature had kneaded the kindly clay that composes it, she said, "I can no more."

You, my good Sir, were born under kinder stars; but your fraternal sympathy, I well know, can enter into the feelings of the young man who goes into life with the laudable ambition to *do* something, and to *be* something among his fellow-creatures, but whom the consciousness of friendless obscurity presses

to the earth and wounds to the soul!

Even the fairest of his virtues are against him. That independent spirit and that ingenuous modesty—qualities inseparable from a noble mind—are, with the million, circumstances not a little disqualifying. What pleasure is in the power of the fortunate and the happy, by their notice and patronage, to brighten the countenance and glad the heart of such depressed youth! I am not so angry with mankind for their deaf economy of the purse; the goods of this world cannot be divided without being lessened: but why be a niggard of that which bestows bliss on a fellow-creature, yet takes nothing from our own means of enjoyment? We wrap ourselves up in the cloak of our own better fortune, and turn away our eyes, lest the wants and woes of our brother-mortals should disturb the selfish apathy of our souls!

I am the worst hand in the world at asking a favour. That indirect address, that insinuating implication, which, without any positive request, plainly expresses your wish, is a talent not to be acquired at a plough-tail. Tell me then, for you can, in what periphrasis of language, in what circumvolution of phrase, I shall envelope, yet not conceal, this plain story: "My dear Mr. Tait, my friend Mr. Duncan, whom I have the pleasure of introducing to you, is a young lad of your own profession, and a gentleman of much modesty and great worth. Perhaps it may be in your power to assist him in the, to him, important consideration of getting a place; but, at all events, your notice and acquaintance will be a very great acquisition to him; and I dare pledge myself that he will never disgrace your favour."

You may possibly be surprised, Sir, at such a letter from me; 'tis,

I own, in the usual way of calculating these matters, more than our acquaintance entitles me to; but my answer is short. Of all the men at your time of life whom I knew in Edinburgh, you are the most accessible on the side on which I have assailed you. You are very much altered indeed from what you were when I knew you, if generosity point the path you will not tread, or humanity call to you in vain.

As to myself, a being to whose interest I believe you are still a well-wisher, I am here, breathing at all times, thinking sometimes, and rhyming now and then. Every situation has its share of the cares and pains of life, and my situation I am persuaded has a full ordinary allowance of its pleasures and enjoyments.

My best compliments to your father and Miss Tait. If you have an opportunity, please remember me in the solemn league and covenant of friendship to Mrs. Lewis Hay. I am a wretch for not writing her; but I am so hackneyed with self-accusation in that way, that my conscience lies in my bosom with scarce the sensibility of an oyster in its shell. Where is Lady McKenzie? wherever she is, God bless her! I likewise beg leave to trouble you with compliments to Mr. Wm. Hamilton, Mrs. Hamilton and family, and Mrs. Chalmers, when you are in that country. Should you meet with Miss Nimmo, please remember me kindly to her.

R. B.

CLXXV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

ELLISLAND, *November, 1790.*

"As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country."

Fate has long owed me a letter of good news from you, in return

for the many tidings of sorrow which I have received. In this instance I most cordially obey the Apostle—"Rejoice with them that do rejoice." For me *to sing* for joy, is no new thing; but *to preach* for joy, as I have done in the commencement of this epistle, is a pitch of extravagant rapture to which I never rose before.

I read your letter—I literally jumped for joy: how could such a mercurial creature as a poet lumpishly keep his seat on the receipt of the best news from his best friend? I seized my gilt-headed Wangee rod, an instrument indispensably necessary in my left hand, in the moment of inspiration and rapture; and stride, stride—quick and quicker—out skipt I among the broomy banks of Nith to muse over my joy by retail. To keep within the bounds of prose was impossible. Mrs. Little's is a more elegant, but not a more sincere, compliment to the sweet little fellow than I, extempore almost, poured out to him in the following verses:—

"Sweet flow'ret, pledge o' meikle love,
And ward o' mony a prayer,
What heart o' stane wad thou na move,
Sae helpless, sweet, an' fair?
November hirples o'er the lea
Chill on thy lovely form;
But gane, alas! the shelt'ring tree
Should shield thee frae the storm."

I am much flattered by your approbation of my "Tam o' Shanter," which you express in your former letter; though, by the by, you load me in that said letter with accusations heavy and many; to all which I plead, *not guilty!* Your book is, I hear, on the road to reach me. As to printing of poetry, when you prepare it for the press, you have only to spell it right, and place the capital letters properly: as to the punctuation, the printers do that themselves. . . .—R. B.

CLXXVI.

TO MR. PETER HILL.

ELLISLAND, 17th January, 1791.

TAKE these three guineas, and place them over against that damned account of yours, which has gagged my mouth these five or six months! I can as little write good things as apologies to the man I owe money to. O the supreme curse of making three guineas do the business of five! Not all the labours of Hercules, not all the Hebrews' three centuries of Egyptian bondage, were such an insuperable business, such an infernal task! Poverty! thou half-sister of death, thou cousin-german of hell! where shall I find force of execration equal to the amplitude of thy demerits? Oppressed by thee, the venerable ancient, grown hoary in the practice of every virtue, laden with years and wretchedness, implores a little, little aid to support his existence from a stony-hearted son of Mammon, whose sun of prosperity never knew a cloud; and is by him denied and insulted. Oppressed by thee, the man of sentiment, whose heart glows with independence and melts with sensibility, inly pines under the neglect, or writhes in bitterness of soul under the contumely of arrogant, unfeeling wealth. Oppressed by thee, the son of genius, whose ill-starred ambition plants him at the tables of the fashionable and polite, must see in suffering silence his remark neglected and his person despised, while shallow greatness, in his idiot attempts at wit, shall meet with countenance and applause. Nor is it only the family of worth that have reason to complain of thee: the children of folly and vice, though in common with thee the offspring of evil, smart equally under thy rod. Owing to thee, the man of unfortunate

disposition and neglected education is condemned as a fool for his dissipation; despised and shunned as a needy wretch, when his follies, as usual, bring him to want; and when his unprincipled necessities drive him to dishonest practices, he is abhorred as a miscreant, and perishes by the justice of his country. But far otherwise is the lot of the man of family and fortune. *His* early follies and extravagance are spirit and fire; *his* consequent wants are the embarrassments of an honest fellow; and when, to remedy the matter, he has gained a legal commission to plunder distant provinces, or ~~more~~ ^{more} ~~secret~~ ^{secret} ~~practical~~ ^{practical} nations, he returns, perhaps, laden with the spoils of rapine and murder, lives wicked and respected, and dies a scoundrel and a lord. Nay, worst of all, alas! for helpless woman. The needy prostitute, who has shivered at the corner of the street, waiting to earn the wages of casual prostitution, is left neglected and insulted, ridden down by the chariot-wheels of the coroneted R^{IP}, hurrying on to the guilty assignation; she who, without the same necessities to plead, riots nightly in the same guilty trade.

Well! divines may say of it what they please, but execration is to the mind what phlebotomy is to the body: the vital sluices of both are wonderfully relieved by their respective evacuations.—R. B.

CLXXVII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

ELLISLAND, 7th [Feb. 2] 1791.

WHEN I tell you, Madam, that by a fall, not from my horse, but with my horse, I have been a cripple some time, and that this is the first day my arm and hand have been able to serve me in writing, you will allow that it is too good an apology

for my seemingly ungrateful silence. I am now getting better, and am able to rhyme a little, which implies some tolerable ease; as I cannot think that the most poetic genius is able to compose on the rack.

I do not remember if ever I mentioned to you my having an idea of composing an elegy on the late Miss Burnet of Monboddoo. I had the honour of being pretty well acquainted with her, and have seldom felt so much at the loss of an acquaintance, as when I heard that so amiable and accomplished a piece of God's work was no more. I have as yet gone no further than the following fragment, of which please let me have your opinion. You know that elegy is a subject so much exhausted, that any new idea on the business is not to be expected: 'tis well if we can place an old idea in a new light. How far I have succeeded as to this last you will judge from what follows.

[Here comes the Elegy.]

I have proceeded no further.

Your kind letter, with your kind *remembrance* of your godson, came safe. This last, Madam, is scarcely what my pride can bear. As to the little fellow, he is, partiality apart, the finest boy I have of a long time seen. He is now seventeen months old, has the small-pox and measles over, has cut several teeth, and never had a grain of doctor's drugs in his bowels.

I am truly happy to hear that the "little floweret" is blooming so fresh and fair, and that the "mother plant" is rather recovering her drooping head. Soon and well may her "cruel wounds" be healed! I have written thus far with a good deal of difficulty. When I get a little abler you shall hear further from,

Madam, yours,

R. B.

CLXXVIII.

TO THE REV. ARCH. ALISON.

ELLISLAND, near Dumfries,
14th Feb., 1791.

SIR,

You must by this time have set me down as one of the most ungrateful of men. You did me the honour to present me with a book which does honour to science and the intellectual powers of man, and I have not even so much as acknowledged the receipt of it. The fact is, you yourself are to blame for it. Flattered as I was by your telling me that you wished to have my opinion of the work, the old spiritual enemy of mankind, who knows well that vanity is one of the sins that most easily beset me, put it into my head to ponder over the performance with the look-out of a critic, and to draw up, forsooth! a deep learned digest of strictures on a composition of which, in fact, until I read the book, I did not even know the first principles. I own, Sir, that at first glance several of your propositions startled me as paradoxical. That the martial clangour of a trumpet had something in it vastly more grand, heroic, and sublime, than the twingle-twangle of a jews-harp; that the delicate flexure of a rose-twig, when the half-blown flower is heavy with the tears of the dawn, was infinitely more beautiful and elegant than the upright stub of a burdock, and that from something innate and independent of all associations of ideas;—these I had set down as irrefragable, orthodox truths, until perusing your book shook my faith. In short, Sir, except Euclid's "Elements of Geometry," which I made a shift to unravel by my father's fireside, in the winter evenings of the first season I held the plough, I never read a book which gave me such

a quantum of information, and added so much to my stock of ideas, as your "Essays on the Principles of Taste." One thing, Sir, you must forgive my mentioning as an uncommon merit in the work—I mean the language. To clothe abstract philosophy in elegance of style sounds something like a contradiction in terms; but you have convinced me that they are quite compatible.

I enclose you some poetic bagatelles of my late composition. The one in print is my first essay in the way of telling a tale.

I am, Sir, &c.

R. B.

CLXXIX.

TO THE REV. G. BAIRD,

LONDON.

ELLISLAND, [Feb.] 1791.

REVEREND SIR,

Why did you, my dear Sir, write to me in such a hesitating style on the business of poor Bruce? Don't I know, and have I not felt, the many ills, the peculiar ills, that poetic flesh is heir to? You shall have your choice of all the unpublished poems I have; and had your letter had my direction, so as to have reached me sooner (it only came to my hand this moment), I should have directly put you out of suspense on the subject. I only ask, that some prefatory advertisement in the book, as well as the subscription bills, may bear, that the publication is solely for the benefit of Bruce's mother. I would not put it in the power of ignorance to surmise, or malice to insinuate, that I clubbed a share in the work from mercenary motives. Nor need you give me credit for any remarkable generosity in my part of the business. I have such a host of peccadilloes, failings, follies,

and backslidings (anybody but myself might perhaps give some of them a worse appellation), that by way of some balance, however trifling, in the account, I am fain to do any good that occurs in my very limited power to a fellow-creature, just for the selfish purpose of clearing a little the vista of retrospection.—R. B.

no fault of mine that I was born to dependence; nor is it Mr Graham's chiefest praise that he can command influence: but it is his merit to bestow, not only with the kindness of a brother, but with the politeness of a gentleman, and I trust it shall be mine, to receive with thankful remembrance and remember with undiminished gratitude.—R. B.

CLXXX.

TO MRS. GRAHAM,
OF FINTRY.

ELLISLAND, *Feb. 1791.*

MADAM,

Whether it is that the story of our Mary Queen of Scots has a peculiar effect on the feelings of a poet, or whether I have in the enclosed ballad succeeded beyond my usual poetic success, I know not; but it has pleased me beyond any effort of my muse for a good while past: on that account I enclose it particularly to you. It is true, the purity of my motives may be suspected. I am already deeply indebted to Mr. Graham's goodness; and what, *in the usual ways of men*, is of infinitely greater importance, Mr. G. can do me service of the utmost importance in time to come. I was born a poor dog; and however I may occasionally pick a better bone than I used to do, I know I must live and die poor: but I will indulge the flattering faith that my poetry will considerably outlive my poverty; and without any fustian affectation of spirit, I can promise and affirm, that it must be no ordinary craving of the latter shall ever make me do anything injurious to the honest fame of the former. Whatever may be my failings, for failings are a part of human nature, may they ever be those of a generous heart and an independent mind! It is

CLXXXI.

TO DR. JOHN MOORE,
LONDON.

ELLISLAND, *27th Feb, 1791.*

I DO not know, Sir, whether you are a subscriber to Grose's "Antiquities of Scotland." If you are, the enclosed poem will not be altogether new to you. Captain Grose did me the favour to send me a dozen copies of the proof sheet, of which this is one. Should you have read the piece before, still this will answer the principal end I have in view: it will give me another opportunity of thanking you for all your goodness to the rustic bard, and also of showing you, that the abilities you have been pleased to commend and patronize are still employed in the way you wish.

The "Elegy on Captain Henderson" is a tribute to the memory of a man I loved much. Poets have in this the same advantage as Roman Catholics; they can be of service to their friends after they have passed that bourne where all other kindness ceases to be of avail. Whether, after all, either the one or the other be of any real service to the dead is, I fear, very problematical; but I am sure they are highly gratifying to the living; and as a very orthodox text, I forget where, in Scripture says, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," so say I, Whatsoever is not detrimental

to society, and is of positive enjoyment, is of God, the Giver of all good things, and ought to be received and enjoyed by His creatures with thankful delight. As almost all my religious tenets originate from my heart, I am wonderfully pleased with the idea, that I can still keep up a tender intercourse with the dearly beloved friend, or still more dearly beloved mistress, who is gone to the world of spirits.

The ballad on Queen Mary was begun while I was busy with Percy's "Reliques of English Poetry." By the way, how much is every honest heart, which has a tincture of Caledonian prejudice, obliged to you for your glorious story of Buchanan and Targe! 'Twas an unequivocal proof of your loyal gallantry of soul, giving Targe the victory. I should have been mortified to the ground if you had not. . . .

I have just read over, once more of many times, your "Zeluco." I marked with my pencil, as I went along, every passage that pleased me particularly above the rest; and one or two, I think, which, with humble deference, I am disposed to think unequal to the merits of the book. I have sometimes thought to transcribe these marked passages, or at least so much of them as to point where they are, and send them to you. Original strokes that strongly depict the human heart is your and Fielding's province, beyond any other novelist I have ever perused. Richardson, indeed, might perhaps be excepted; but, unhappily, his *dramatis personæ* are beings of another world; and however they may captivate the unexperienced, romantic fancy of a boy or a girl, they will ever, in proportion as we have made human nature our study, dissatisfy our riper years.

As to my private concerns, I am

going on, a mighty tax-gatherer before the Lord, and have lately had the interest to get myself ranked on the list of Excise as a supervisor. I am not yet employed as such, but in a few years I shall fall into the file of supervisorship by seniority. I have had an immense loss in the death of the Earl of Glencairn, the patron from whom all my fame and fortune took its rise. Independent of my grateful attachment to him, which was indeed so strong that it pervaded my very soul, and was entwined with the thread of my existence, so soon as the Prince's friends had got in (and every dog, you know, has his day), my getting forward in the Excise would have been an easier business than otherwise it will be. Though this was a consummation devoutly to be wished, yet, thank Heaven, I can live and rhyme as I am; and as to my boys, poor little fellows! if I cannot place them on as high an elevation in life as I could wish, I shall, if I am favoured so much of the Disposer of events as to see that period, fix them on as broad and independent a basis as possible. Among the many wise adages which have been treasured up by our Scottish ancestors, this is one of the best, *Better be the head o' the commonalty than the tail o' the gentry.*

But I am got on a subject which, however interesting to me, is of no manner of consequence to you; so I shall give you a short poem on the other page, and close this with assuring you how sincerely I have the honour to be,

Yours, &c.

R. B.

CLXXXII.

TO MR. ALEX. CUNNINGHAM.

ELLISLAND, 11th March, 1791.

IF the foregoing piece be worth your strictures, let me have them.

For my own part, a thing that I have just composed always appears through a double portion of that partial medium in which an author will ever view his own works. I believe, in general, novelty has something in it that inebriates the fancy, and not unfrequently dissipates and fumes away like other intoxication, and leaves the poor patient, as usual, with an aching heart. A striking instance of this might be adduced in the revolution of many a hymeneal honeymoon. But lest I sink into stupid prose, and so sacrilegiously intrude on the office of my parish priest, I shall fill up the page in my own way, and give you another song of my late composition, which will appear perhaps in Johnson's work, as well as the former.

You must know a beautiful Jacobite air, "There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame." When political combustion ceases to be the object of princes and patriots, it then, you know, becomes the lawful prey of historians and poets.

"By yon castle wa' at the close of the day
I heard a man sing, tho' his head it was grey;
And as he was singing, the tears fast down
came—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame."

If you like the air, and if the stanzas hit your fancy, you cannot imagine, my dear friend, how much you would oblige me, if, by the charms of your delightful voice, you would give my honest effusion to "the memory of joys that are passed" to the few friends whom you indulge in that pleasure. But I have scribbled on till I hear the clock has intimated the near approach of

"That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane."

So good-night to you! Sound be your sleep, and delectable your dreams! *Propos*, how do you

like this thought in a ballad I have just now on the *tapis* ?—

"I look to the west when I gae to rest,
That happy my dreams and my slumbers
may be:
For, far in the west is he I lo'e best,
The lad that is dear to my babe and me"

Good-night, once more, and God
bless you!—R. B.

CLXXXIII.

TO

MR. ALEXANDER DALZIEL,
FACTOR, FINDLAYSFON.

ELLISLAND, 19th March, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have taken the liberty to frank this letter to you, as it encloses an idle poem of mine [Lament for Glencairn], which I send you, and, God knows, you may perhaps pay dear enough for it if you read it through. Not that this is my own opinion, but an author, by the time he has composed and corrected his work, has quite pored away all his powers of critical discrimination.

I can easily guess from my own heart what you have felt on a late most melancholy event. God knows what I have suffered at the loss of my best friend, my first and dearest patron and benefactor; the man to whom I owe all that I am and have! I am gone into mourning for him, and with more sincerity of grief than I fear some will, who by nature's ties ought to feel on the occasion.

I will be exceedingly obliged to you indeed, to let me know the news of the noble family—how the poor mother and the two sisters support their loss. I had a packet of poetic bagatelles ready to send to Lady Betty, when I saw the fatal tidings in the newspaper. I see by the same channel that the honoured remains of my noble patron are designed to be brought to the family burial-place. Dare I

trouble you to let me know privately before the day of interment, that I may cross the country, and steal among the crowd, to pay a tear to the last sight of my ever-revered benefactor? It will oblige me beyond expression.—R. B.

CLXXXIV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

ELLISLAND, 11th April, 1791.

I AM once more able, my honoured friend, to return you, with my own hand, thanks for the many instances of your friendship, and particularly for your kind anxiety in this last disaster that my evil genius had in store for me. However, life is chequered—joy and sorrow—for on Saturday morning last Mrs. Burns made me a present of a fine boy; rather stouter but not so handsome as your godson was at his time of life. Indeed I look on your little namesake to be my *chef d'œuvre* in that species of manufacture, as I look on "Tam o' Shanter" to be my standard performance in the poetical line. 'Tis true, both the one and the other discover a spice of roguish waggery that might perhaps be as well spared; but then they also show, in my opinion, a force of genius and a finishing polish that I despair of ever excelling. Mrs. Burns is getting stout again, and laid as lustily about her to-day at breakfast as a reaper from the corn-ridge. That is the peculiar privilege and blessing of our hale, sprightly damsels, that are bred among the *hay and heather*. We cannot hope for that highly polished mind, that charming delicacy of soul, which is found among the female world in the more elevated stations of life, and which is certainly by far the most bewitching charm in the famous cestus of Venus. It is indeed such an inestimable treasure,

that, where it can be had in its native heavenly purity, unstained by some one or other of the many shades of affectation, and unalloyed by some one or other of the many species of caprice, I declare to Heaven I should think it cheaply purchased at the expense of every other earthly good! But as this angelic creature is, I am afraid, extremely rare in any station and rank of life, and totally denied to such a humble one as mine, we meaner mortals must put up with the next rank of female excellence. As fine a figure and face we can produce as any rank of life whatever; rustic, native grace; unaffected modesty and unsullied purity; nature's mother-wit and the rudiments of taste; a simplicity of soul, unsuspicious of, because unacquainted with, the crooked ways of a selfish, interested, disingenuous world; and, the dearest charm of all the rest, a yielding sweetness of disposition and a generous warmth of heart, grateful for love on our part and ardently glowing with a more than equal return; these, with a healthy frame, a sound, vigorous constitution, which your higher ranks can scarcely ever hope to enjoy, are the charms of lovely woman in my humble walk of life.

This is the greatest effort my broken arm has yet made. Do let me hear, by first post, how *cher petit Monsieur* comes on with his small-pox. May Almighty Goodness preserve and restore him!—R. B.

CLXXXV.

TO

ALEX. FRASER TYTLER, ESQ.

ELLISLAND, April, 1791.

SIR,

Nothing less than the unfortunate accident I have met with could have prevented my grateful acknowledgments for your letter.

His own favourite poem, and that an essay in the walk of the Muses entirely new to him, where consequently his hopes and fears were on the most anxious alarm for his success in the attempt,—to have that poem so much applauded by one of the first judges, was the most delicious vibration that ever thrilled along the heart-strings of a poor poet. However, Providence, to keep up the proper proportion of evil with the good, which it seems is necessary in this sublunary state, thought proper to check my exultation by a very serious misfortune. A day or two after I received your letter my horse came down with me and broke my right arm. As this is the first service my arm has done me since its disaster, I find myself unable to do more than just in general terms thank you for this additional instance of your patronage and friendship. As to the faults you detected in the piece, they are truly there: one of them, the hit at the lawyer and priest, I shall cut out; as to the falling off in the catastrophe, for the reason you justly adduce, it cannot easily be remedied. Your approbation, Sir, has given me such additional spirits to persevere in this species of poetic composition, that I am already revolving two or three stories in my fancy. If I can bring these floating ideas to bear any kind of embodied form, it will give me an additional opportunity of assuring you how much I have the honour to be, &c.—R. B.

CLXXXVI.

TO CHARLES SHARPE, ESQ.,
OF HODDAM.

ELLISLAND, 22nd April, 1791.

[*Under a fictitious signature enclosing a ballad.*]

It is true, Sir, you are a gentleman of rank and fortune, and I am a

poor devil; you are a feather in the cap of society, and I am a very hobnail in his shoes; yet I have the honour to belong to the same family with you, and on that score I now address you. You will perhaps suspect that I am going to claim affinity with the ancient and honourable house of Kirkpatrick. No, no, Sir: I cannot indeed be properly said to belong to any house, or even any province or kingdom, as my mother, who for many years was spouse to a marching regiment, gave me into this bad world, aboard the packet-boat, somewhere between Donaghadee and Portpatrick. By our common family I mean, Sir, the family of the Muses. I am a fiddler and a poet; and you, I am told, play an exquisite violin, and have a standard taste in the *belles lettres*. The other day, a brother catgut gave me a charming Scots air of your composition. If I was pleased with the tune, I was in raptures with the title you have given it; and taking up the idea, I have spun it into the three stanzas enclosed. Will you allow me, Sir, to present you them, as the dearest offering that a misbegotten son of poverty and rhyme has to give? I have a longing to take you by the hand and unburthen my heart by saying, "Sir, I honour you as a man who supports the dignity of human nature amid an age when frivolity and avarice have, between them, debased us below the brutes that perish!" But, alas, Sir! to me you are unapproachable. It is true, the Muses baptized me in Castalian streams, but the thoughtless gipsies forgot to give me a name. As the sex have served many a good fellow, the Nine have given me a great deal of pleasure, but, bewitching jades! they have beggared me. Would they but spare me a little of their cast-linen! Were it only in my power to say that I have a shirt

on my back! But, the idle wenches! like Solomon's lilies, "they toil not, neither do they spin:" so I must e'en continue to tie my remnant of a cravat, like the hangman's rope, round my naked throat, and coax my galligaskins to keep together their many-coloured fragments. As to the affair of shoes, I have given that up. My pilgrimages in my ballad-trade, from town to town, and on your stony-hearted turnpikes too, are what not even the hide of Job's Behemoth could bear. The coat on my back is no more: I shall not speak evil of the dead. It would be equally unhandsome and ungrateful to find fault with my old surtout, which so kindly supplies and conceals the want of that coat. My hat indeed is a great favourite; and though I got it literally for an old song, I would not exchange it for the best beaver in Britain. I was, during several years, a kind of factotum servant to a country clergyman, where I pickt up a good many scraps of learning, particularly in some branches of the mathematics. Whenever I feel inclined to rest myself on my way, I take my seat under a hedge, laying my poetic wallet on the one side, and my fiddle-case on the other, and placing my hat between my legs, I can by means of its brim, or rather brims, go through the whole doctrine of the Conic Sections.

However, Sir, don't let me mislead you, as if I would interest your pity. Fortune has so much forsaken me, that she has taught me to live without her; and amid all my rags and poverty I am as independent, and much more happy, than a monarch of the world. According to the hackneyed metaphor, I value the several actors in the great drama of life simply as they act their parts. I can look on a worthless fellow of a duke with unqualified contempt, and can regard an honest scavenger

with sincere respect. As you, Sir, go through your rôle with such distinguished merit, permit me to make one in the chorus of universal applause, and assure you that, with the highest respect,

I have the honour to be, &c.,

JOHNNY FAA.

CLXXXVII.

TO SIR JOHN SINCLAIR,
OF ULBSTER.

ELLISLAND, 1791.

SIR,

The following circumstance has, I believe, been omitted in the statistical account transmitted to you of the parish of Dunscore, in Nithsdale. I beg leave to send it to you, because it is new, and may be useful. How far it is deserving of a place in your patriotic publication, you are the best judge.

To store the minds of the lower classes with useful knowledge is certainly of very great importance, both to them as individuals, and to society at large. Giving them a turn for reading and reflection is giving them a source of innocent and laudable amusement, and, besides, raises them to a more dignified degree in the scale of rationality. Impressed with this idea, a gentleman in this parish, Robert Riddell, Esq. of Glenriddell, set on foot a species of circulating library, on a plan so simple as to be practicable in any corner of the country; and so useful, as to deserve the notice of every country gentleman who thinks the improvement of that part of his own species whom chance has thrown into the humble walks of the peasant and the artizan a matter worthy of his attention.

Mr. Riddell got a number of his own tenants and farming neighbours to form themselves into a society for the purpose of having a library

among themselves. They entered into a legal engagement to abide by it for three years; with a saving clause or two, in case of a removal to a distance, or death. Each member, at his entry, paid five shillings; and at each of their meetings, which were held every fourth Saturday, sixpence more. With their entry-money, and the credit which they took on the faith of their future funds, they laid in a tolerable stock of books at the commencement. What authors they were to purchase was always decided by the majority. At every meeting all the books, under certain fines and forfeitures, by way of penalty, were to be produced; and the members had their choice of the volumes in rotation. He whose name stood, for that night, first on the list, had his choice of what volume he pleased in the whole collection; the second had his choice after the first; the third after the second, and so on to the last. At next meeting, he who had been first on the list at the preceding meeting, was last at this; he who had been second was first; and so on, through the whole three years. At the expiration of the engagement the books were sold by auction, but only among the members themselves; each man had his share of the common stock, in money or in books, as he chose to be a purchaser or not.

At the breaking up of this little society, which was formed under Mr. Riddell's patronage, what with benefactions of books from him, and what with their own purchases, they had collected together upwards of one hundred and fifty volumes. It will easily be guessed, that a good deal of trash would be bought. Among the books, however, of this little library were Blair's Sermons, Robertson's History of Scotland, Hume's History of the Stewarts, "The Spectator,"

"Idler," "Adventurer," "Mirror," "Lounger," "Observer," "Man of Feeling," "Man of the World," "Chrysal," "Don Quixote," "Joseph Andrews," &c. A peasant who can read and enjoy such books is certainly a much superior being to his neighbour who, perhaps, stalks beside his team very little removed, except in shape, from the brutes he drives.

Wishing your patriotic exertions their so much merited success,

I am, Sir,

Your humble Servant,

A PEASANT.

CLXXXVIII.

TO A CRITIC.

ELLISLAND, 1791.

THOU eunuch of language: thou Englishman, who never was south the Tweed: thou servile echo of fashionable barbarisms: thou quack, vending the nostrums of empirical elocution: thou marriage-maker between vowels and consonants, on the Gretna-green of caprice: thou cobbler, botching the flimsy socks of bombast oratory: thou blacksmith, hammering the rivets of absurdity: thou butcher, embruuing thy hands in the bowels of orthography: thou arch-heretic in pronunciation: thou pitch-pipe of affected emphasis: thou carpenter, mortising the awkward joints of jarring sentences: thou squeaking dissonance of cadence: thou pimp of gender: thou Lyon Herald to silly etymology: thou antipode of grammar: thou executioner of construction: thou brood of the speech-distracting builders of the Tower of Babel: thou lingual confusion worse confounded: thou scape-gallows from the land of syntax: thou scavenger of mode and tense: thou murderous accoucheur of infant

learning: thou *ignis fatuus*, misleading the steps of benighted ignorance: thou pickle-herring in the puppet-show of nonsense: thou faithful recorder of barbarous idiom: thou persecutor of syllabication: thou baleful meteor, foretelling and facilitating the rapid approach of Nox and Erebus.—R. B.

CLXXXIX.

TO ———

ELLISLAND, 1791.

DEAR SIR,

I am exceedingly to blame in not writing you long ago; but the truth is, that I am the most indolent of all human beings; and when I matriculate in the herald's office, I intend that my supporters shall be two sloths, my crest a slow-worm, and the motto, "Deil tak' the foremost." So much by way of apology for not thanking you sooner for your kind execution of my commission.—R. B.

CXC.

TO MR. ALEX. CUNNINGHAM.

11th June, 1791.

LET me interest you, my dear Cunningham, in behalf of the gentleman who waits on you with this. He is a Mr. Clarke, of Moffat, principal schoolmaster there, and is at present suffering severely under the persecution of one or two powerful individuals of his employers. He is accused of harshness to boys that were placed under his care. God help the teacher, if a man of sensibility and genius, and such is my friend Clarke, when a booby father presents him with his booby son, and insists on lighting up the rays of science in a fellow's head whose skull is impervious and

inaccessible by any other way than a positive fracture with a cudgel, a fellow whom, in fact, it savours of impiety to attempt making a scholar of, as he has been marked a block-head in the book of fate, at the almighty fiat of his Creator.

The patrons of Moffat School are the ministers, magistrates and town-council of the town, and as the business comes now before them, let me beg my dearest friend to do everything in his power to serve the interests of a man of genius and worth, and a man whom I particularly respect and esteem. You know some good fellows among the magistracy and council, but particularly you have much to say with a reverend gentleman, to whom you have the honour of being very nearly related, and whom this country and age have had the honour to produce. I need not name the historian of Charles V. I tell him, through the medium of his nephew's influence, that Mr. Clarke is a gentleman who will not disgrace even his patronage. I know the merits of the cause thoroughly, and say it, that my friend is falling a sacrifice to prejudiced ignorance, and envious, causeless malice.

God help the children of dependence! Hated and persecuted by their enemies, and too often, alas! almost unexceptionably, received by their friends with disrespect and reproach, under the thin disguise of cold civility and humiliating advice. Oh, to be a sturdy savage, stalking in the pride of his independence amid the solitary wilds of his deserts, rather than, in civilized life, helplessly to tremble for a subsistence, precarious as the caprice of a fellow-creature! Every man has his virtues, and no man is without his failings; and curse on that privileged plain-dealing of friendship which in the hour of my

calamity cannot reach forth the helping hand, without at the same time pointing out those failings, and apportioning them their share in procuring my present distress. My friends, for such the world calls ye, and such ye think yourselves to be, pass by my virtues if you please, but do, also, spare my follies: the first will witness in my breast for themselves, and the last will give pain enough to the ingenuous mind without you. And since deviating more or less from the paths of propriety and rectitude must be incident to human nature, do thou, Fortune, put it in my power, always from myself, and of myself, to bear the consequences of those errors! I do not want to be independent that I may sin, but I want to be independent in my sinning.

To return in this rambling letter to the subject I set out with, let me recommend my friend, Mr. Clarke, to your acquaintance and good offices; his worth entitles him to the one, and his gratitude will merit the other. I long much to hear from you. Adieu!—R. B.

CXCI.

TO MISS DAVIES.

[Aug. 1791.]

[*Enclosing a ballad made upon her.*]

MADAM,

I understand my very worthy neighbour, Mr. Riddell, has informed you that I have made you the subject of some verses. There is something so provoking in the idea of being the burthen of a ballad, that I do not think Job or Moses, though such patterns of patience and meekness, could have resisted the curiosity to know what that ballad was: so my worthy friend has done me a mischief, which I dare say he never intended, and reduced me to the

unfortunate alternative of leaving your curiosity ungratified or else disgusting you with my verses, the unfinished production of a random moment, and never meant to have met your ear. I have heard or read somewhere of a gentleman who had some genius, much eccentricity, and very considerable dexterity with his pencil. In the accidental groups of life into which one is thrown, wherever this gentleman met with a character in more than ordinary degree congenial to his heart, he used to steal a sketch of the face, merely, he said, as a *nota bene*, to point out the agreeable recollection to his memory. What this gentleman's pencil was to him, my muse is to me, and the verses I do myself the honour to send you are a memento exactly of the same kind that he indulged in.

It may be more owing to the fastidiousness of my caprice than the delicacy of my taste, but I am so often tired, and hurt with the insipidity, affectation, and pride of mankind, that when I meet with a person "after my own heart," I positively feel what an orthodox Protestant would call a species of idolatry, which acts on my fancy like inspiration, and I can no more desist rhyming on the impulse, than an Æolian harp can refuse its tones to the streaming air. A dissuch or two would be the consequence, though the object which hit my fancy were gray-bearded age; but where my theme is youth and beauty, a young lady, whose personal charms, wit, and sentiment are equally striking and unaffected—by heavens! though I had lived three-score years a married man, and three-score years before I was a married man, my imagination would hallow the very idea, and I am truly sorry that the enclosed stanzas have done such poor justice to such a subject.—R. B.

CXCII.

TO THE SAME.

[Aug. 1791.]

It is impossible, Madam, that the generous warmth and angelic purity of your youthful mind can have any idea of that moral disease under which I unhappily must rank as the chief of sinners: I mean a torpidity of the moral powers, that may be called a lethargy of conscience. In vain Remorse rears her horrent crest, and rouses all her snakes: beneath the deadly-fixed eye and leaden hand of Indolence, their wildest ire is charmed into the torpor of the bat, slumbering out the rigours of winter in the chink of a ruined wall. Nothing less, Madam, could have made me so long neglect your obliging commands. Indeed, I had one apology—the bagatelle was not worth presenting. Besides, so strongly am I interested in Miss Davies's fate and welfare in the serious business of life, amid its chances and changes, that to make her the subject of a silly ballad is downright mockery of these ardent feelings. 'Tis like an impertinent jest to a dying friend.

Gracious Heaven! why this disparity between our wishes and our powers? Why is the most generous wish to make others blest impotent and ineffectual, as the idle breeze that crosses the pathless desert? In my walks of life I have met with a few people to whom how gladly would I have said: "Go, be happy! I know that your hearts have been wounded by the scorn of the proud, whom accident has placed above you—or, worse still, in whose hands are, perhaps, placed many of the comforts of your life. But there! ascend that rock, Independence, and look justly down on their littleness of soul. Make the worthless tremble

under your indignation, and the foolish sink before your contempt; and largely impart that happiness to others, which I am certain will give yourselves so much pleasure to bestow."

Why, dear Madam, must I wake from this delightful reverie, and find it all a dream? Why, amid my generous enthusiasm, must I find myself poor and powerless, incapable of wiping one tear from the eye of pity, or of adding one comfort to the friend I love? Out upon the world, say I, that its affairs are administered so ill! They talk of reform: good Heaven! what a reform would I make among the sons, and even the daughters, of men! Down, immediately, should go fools from the high places where misbegotten chance has perked them up, and through life should they skulk, ever haunted by their native insignificance, as the body marches accompanied by its shadow. As for a much more formidable class, the knaves, I am at a loss what to do with them; had I a world, there should not be a knave in it. . . .

But the hand that could give, I would liberally fill. and I would pour delight on the heart that could kindly forgive and generously love.

Still, the inequalities of life are among men comparatively tolerable; but there is a delicacy, a tenderness, accompanying every view in which we can place lovely woman, that are grated and shocked at the rude, capricious distinctions of Fortune. Woman is the blood-royal of life: let there be slight degrees of precedence among them—but let them be all sacred. Whether this last sentiment be right or wrong, I am not accountable; it is an original component feature of my mind. . . .

R. B.

CXCIII.

TO MR. THOMAS SLOAN.

ELLISLAND, *Sept. 1, 1791.*

MY DEAR SLOAN,

Suspense is worse than disappointment; for that reason I hurry to tell you that I just now learn that Mr. Ballantine does not choose to interfere more in the business. I am truly sorry for it, but cannot help it.

You blame me for not writing you sooner, but you will please to recollect that you omitted one little necessary piece of information—your address.

However, you know equally well my hurried life, indolent temper, and strength of attachment. It must be a longer period than the longest life “in the world’s hale and undegenerate days,” that will make me forget so dear a friend as Mr. Sloan. I am prodigal enough at times, but I will not part with such a treasure as that.

I can easily enter into the *embarras* of your present situation. You know my favourite quotation from Young—

——“On Reason build RESOLVE,
That column of true majesty in man.”

And that other favourite one from Thomson’s Alfred—

“What proves the hero truly GREAT
Is, never, never to despair.”

Or, shall I quote you an author of your acquaintance?

“—Whether DOING, SUFFERING, or FORBEARING,
You may do miracles by—PERSEVERING.”

I have nothing new to tell you. The few friends we have are going on in the old way. I sold my crop on this day se’ennight, and sold it very well: a guinea an acre, on an average, above value. But such a scene of drunkenness was hardly ever seen in this country. After the rous was over, about thirty people engaged in a battle, every man for his own hand, and fought it out for

three hours. Nor was the scene much better in the house. No fighting, indeed, but folks lying drunk on the floor, and decaning, until both my dogs got so drunk by attending them, that they could not stand. You will easily guess how I enjoyed the scene; as I was no farther over than you used to see me.

Mrs. B. and family have been in Ayrshire these many weeks.

Farewell! and God bless you, my dear friend!—R. B.

CXCIV.

TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

ELLISLAND, 1791.

MY LORD,

Language sinks under the ardour of my feelings when I would thank your lordship for the honour you have done me in inviting me to make one at the coronation of the bust of Thomson. In my first enthusiasm in reading the card you did me the honour to write me, I overlooked every obstacle, and determined to go; but I fear it will not be in my power. A week or two’s absence, in the very middle of my harvest, is what I much doubt I dare not venture on. I once already made a pilgrimage *up* the whole course of the Tweed, and fondly would I take the same delightful journey *down* the windings of that delightful stream.

Your lordship hints at an ode for the occasion: but who would write after Collins? I read over his verses to the memory of Thomson, and despaired. I got indeed to the length of three or four stanzas, in the way of address to the shade of the bard, on crowning his bust. I shall trouble your lordship with the subjoined copy of them, which, I am afraid, will be but too convincing

a proof how unequal I am to the task. However, it affords me an opportunity of approaching your lordship, and declaring how sincerely and gratefully I have the honour to be, &c.—R. B.

[*Here follows the poem "Address to the Shade of Thomson."*]

CXCX.

TO LADY E. CUNNINGHAM.

[ELLISLAND, 1791.]

MY LADY,

I would, as usual, have availed myself of the privilege your goodness has allowed me, of sending you anything I compose in my poetical way; but as I had resolved, so soon as the shock of my irreparable loss would allow me, to pay a tribute to my late benefactor, I determined to make that the first piece I should do myself the honour of sending you. Had the wing of my fancy been equal to the ardour of my heart, the enclosed had been much more worthy your perusal; as it is, I beg leave to lay it at your ladyship's feet. As all the world knows my obligations to the late Earl of Glencairn, I would wish to show as openly that my heart glows, and shall ever glow, with the most grateful sense and remembrance of his lordship's goodness. The sables I did myself the honour to wear to his lordship's memory were not the "mockery of woe." Nor shall my gratitude perish with me! If, among my children, I shall have a son that has a heart, he shall hand it down to his child as a family honour, and a family debt, that my dearest existence I owe to the noble house of Glencairn!

I was about to say, my lady, that if you think the poem may venture to see the light, I would, in some way or other, give it to the world.—R. B.

CXCVI.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

DUMFRIES, Nov. 1791.

MY DEAR AINSLIE,

Can you minister to a mind diseased? Can you, amid the horrors of penitence, regret, remorse, headache, nausea, and all the rest of the d—d hounds of hell that beset a poor wretch who has been guilty of the sin of drunkenness—can you speak peace to a troubled soul?

Miserable perdu that I am, I have tried everything that used to amuse me, but in vain: here must I sit, a monument of the *monstrum* laid up in store for the wick—counting every chick of the clock as it slowly, slowly, numbers over these lazy scoundrels of hours, who, d—n them! are ranked up before me, every one at his neighbour's backside, and every one with a burthen of anguish on his back, to pour on my devoted head—and there is none to pity me. My wife scolds me, my business torments me, and my sins come staring me in the face, every one telling a more bitter tale than his fellow. When I tell you even * * * has lost its power to please, you will guess something of my hell within, and all around me. I began "Elibanks and Elibraes," but the stanzas fell unenjoyed and unfinished from my listless tongue: at last I luckily thought of reading over an old letter of yours, that lay by me, in my bookcase, and I felt something, for the first time since I opened my eyes, of pleasurable existence.—Well—I begin to breathe a little, since I began to write to you. How are you, and what are you doing? How goes Law? *Apropos*, for connexion's sake do not address me as supervisor, for that is an honour I cannot pretend to: I am on the list, as we call it, for a supervisor, and will be called out by and by to act as one; but at

present I am a simple gauger, tho' t'other day I got an appointment to an Excise division of 25*l.* per annum better than the rest. My present income, down money, is 70*l.* per annum. . . .

I have one or two good fellows here whom you would be glad to know. . . . R. B.

CXC VII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

DUMFRIES, 17th December, 1791.

MANY thanks to you, Madam, for your good news respecting the little floweret and the mother-plant. I hope my poetic prayers have been heard, and will be answered up to the warmest sincerity of their fullest extent; and then Mrs. Henri will find her little darling the representative of his late parent, in everything but his abridged existence.

I have just finished the following song, which to a lady the descendant of Wallace, and many heroes of his truly illustrious line, and herself the mother of several soldiers, needs neither preface nor apology:—

"Scene—A Field of Battle. Time of the Day—Evening. The wounded and dying of the victorious army are supposed to join in the following"

SONG OF DEATH.

Farewell, thou fair day, thou green earth, and ye skies

Now gray with the broad setting sun :
Farewell, loves and friendships, ye dear, tender ties—

Our race of existence is run!"—&c.

The circumstance that gave rise to the foregoing verses was, looking over with a musical friend McDonald's collection of Highland airs, I was struck with one, an Isle of Skye tune, entitled "Oran an Aoig; or, the Song of Death," to the measure of which I have adapted my stanzas. I have of late composed two or three other little pieces, which, ere yon full-orbed moon, whose broad impudent face now stares at old mother earth all

night, shall have shrunk into a modest crescent, just peeping forth at dewy dawn, I shall find an hour to transcribe for you. *A Dieu je vous commende.*—R. B.

CXC VIII.

TO MR. WILLIAM SMELLIE,

PRINTER, EDINBURGH.

DUMFRIES, 22d January, 1792.

I SIT down, my dear Sir, to introduce a young lady to you, and a lady in the first ranks of fashion, too. What a task! to you—who care no more for the herd of animals called young ladies, than you do for the herd of animals called young gentlemen. To you—who despise and detest the groupings and combinations of Fashion, as an idiot painter that seems industrious to place staring fools and unprincipled knaves in the foreground of his picture, while men of sense and honesty are too often thrown in the dimmest shades. Mrs. Riddell, who will take this letter to town with her, and send it to you, is a character that, even in your own way, as a naturalist and a philosopher, would be an acquisition to your acquaintance. The lady, too, is a votary to the Muses; and as I think myself somewhat of a judge in my own trade, I assure you that her verses, always correct and often elegant, are much beyond the common run of the *lady poetesses* of the day. She is a great admirer of your book; and, hearing me say that I was acquainted with you, she begged to be known to you, as she is just going to pay her first visit to our Caledonian capital. I told her that her best way was, to desire her near relation, and your intimate friend, Craighdarroch, to have you at his house while she was there; and lest you might think of a lively West Indian girl of eighteen, as girls of

eighteen too often deserve to be thought of, I should take care to remove that prejudice. To be impartial, however, in appreciating the lady's merits, she has one unlucky failing; a failing which you will easily discover, as she seems rather pleased with indulging in it, and a failing that you will pardon, as it is a sin which very much besets yourself:—where she dislikes, or despises, she is apt to make no more a secret of it than where she esteems and respects.

I will not present you with the unmeaning *compliments of the season*, but I will send you my warmest wishes and most ardent prayers, that Fortune may never throw your subsistence to the mercy of a knave, or set your character on the judgment of a fool; but that, upright and erect, you may walk to an honest grave, where men of letters shall say, "Here lies a man who did honour to science," and men of worth shall say, "Here lies a man who did honour to human nature."—R. B.

CXCIX.

TO MR. PETER HILL.

DUMFRIES, 5th Feb. 1792.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I send you by the bearer, Mr. Clarke, a particular friend of mine, six pounds and a shilling, which you will dispose of as follows:—five pounds ten shillings, per account, I owe Mr. R. Burn, architect, for erecting the stone over the grave of poor Fergusson. He was two years in erecting it after I had commissioned him for it, and I have been two years in paying him after he sent me his account; so he and I are quits. He had the *hardiesse* to ask the interest on the sum; but considering that the money was due by one poet for putting a tombstone over another, he may, with grateful

surprise, thank Heaven that he ever saw a *building* of it.

With the remainder of the money pay yourself for the "Office of a Messenger" that I bought of you; and send me by Mr. Clarke a note of its price. Send me likewise the fifth vol. of the "Observer" by Mr. Clarke; and if any money remains, let it stand to account.

I sent you a maukin [hare] by last week's fly, which I hope you received.

My best compliments to Mrs. Hill.
R. B.

CC.

TO FRANCIS GROSE, ESQ.

F.S.A.

DUMFRIES, 1792.

SIR,

I believe among all our Scots *literati* you have not met with Professor Dugald Stewart, who fills the Moral Philosophy chair in the University of Edinburgh. To say that he is a man of the first parts, and, what is more, a man of the first worth, to a gentleman of your general acquaintance, and who so much enjoys the luxury of unencumbered freedom and undisturbed privacy, is not perhaps recommendation enough: but when I inform you that Mr. Stewart's principal characteristic is your favourite feature—that sterling independence of mind which, though every man's right, so few men have the courage to claim, and fewer still the magnanimity to support; when I tell you, that unseduced by splendour, and undisgusted by wretchedness, he appreciates the merits of the various actors in the great drama of life merely as they perform their parts;—in short, he is a man after your own heart, and I comply with his earnest request in letting you know that he wishes above all things to meet with you. His house, Catrine, is within less than a mile of

Sorn Castle, which you proposed visiting ; or if you could transmit him the enclosed, he would, with the greatest pleasure, meet you anywhere in the neighbourhood. I write to Ayrshire to inform Mr. Stewart that I have acquitted myself of my promise. Should your time and spirits permit your meeting with Mr. Stewart, 'tis well ; if not, I hope you will forgive this liberty : and I have at least an opportunity of assuring you with what truth and respect,

I am, Sir,

Your great Admirer
And very humble Servant,
R. B.

CCI.

TO THE SAME.

DUMFRIES, 1792.

AMONG the many witch stories I have heard relating to Alloway Kirk, I distinctly remember only two or three.

Upon a stormy night, amid whistling squalls of wind and bitter blasts of hail—in short, on such a night as the devil would choose to take the air in—a farmer, or a farmer's servant, was plodding and plashing homeward with his plough-irons on his shoulder, having been getting some repairs on them at a neighbouring smithy. His way lay by the Kirk of Alloway, and being rather on the anxious look-out in approaching a place so well known to be a favourite haunt of the devil, and the devil's friends and emissaries, he was struck aghast by discovering, through the horrors of the storm and the stormy night, a light, which, on his nearer approach, plainly showed itself to proceed from the haunted edifice. Whether he had been fortified from above on his devout supplication, as is customary with people when they suspect the immediate presence of Satan, or

whether, according to another custom, he had got courageously drunk at the smithy, I will not pretend to determine ; but so it was, that he ventured to go up to—nay, into—the very Kirk. As luck would have it, his temerity came off unpunished.

The members of the infernal junto were all out on some midnight business or other, and he saw nothing but a kind of kettle, or cauldron, depending from the roof, over the fire, simmering some heads of unchristened children, limbs of executed malefactors, &c., for the business of the night. It was in for a penny, in for a pound, with the honest ploughman, so, without ceremony, he unhooked the cauldron from off the fire, and pouring out its damnable ingredients, inverted it on his head, and carried it fairly home, where it remained long in the family, a living evidence of the truth of the story.

Another story, which I can prove to be equally authentic, was as follows.—

On a market-day, in the town of Ayr, a farmer from Carrick, and consequently whose way lay by the very gate of Alloway Kirk-yard, in order to cross the river Doon at the old bridge, which is about two or three hundred yards farther on than the said gate, had been detained by his business, till by the time he reached Alloway it was the wizard hour, between night and morning.

Though he was terrified with a blaze streaming from the Kirk, yet as it is a well known fact, that to turn back on these occasions is running by far the greatest risk of mischief, he prudently advanced on his road. When he had reached the gate of the Kirk-yard, he was surprised and entertained, through the ribs and arches of an old Gothic window, which still faces the highway, to see a dance of witches merrily footing

it round their old sooty black-guard master, who was keeping them all alive with the power of his bagpipe. The farmer, stopping his horse to observe them a little, could plainly descry the faces of many of his acquaintance and neighbourhood. How the gentleman was dressed, tradition does not say, but that the ladies were all in their smocks; and one of them happening unluckily to have a smock which was considerably too short to answer all the purposes of that piece of dress, our farmer was so tickled that he involuntarily burst out, with a loud laugh, "Weel looppen, Maggy wi' the short sark!" and, recollecting himself, instantly spurred his horse to the top of his speed. I need not mention the universally known fact, that no diabolical power can pursue you beyond the middle of a running stream. Lucky it was for the poor farmer that the river Doon was so near, for notwithstanding the speed of his horse, which was a good one, against he reached the middle of the arch of the bridge, and consequently the middle of the stream, the pursuing, vengeful hags were so close at his heels, that one of them actually sprang to seize him: but it was too late; nothing was on her side of the stream but the horse's tail, which immediately gave way at her infernal grip, as if blasted by a stroke of lightning; but the farmer was beyond her reach. However, the unsightly, tailless condition of the vigorous steed was, to the last hours of the noble creature's life, an awful warning to the Carrick farmers not to stay too late in Ayr markets.

The last relation I shall give, though equally true, is not so well identified as the two former, with regard to the scene; but, as the best authorities give it for Alloway, I shall relate it.

On a summer's evening about

the time that nature puts on her sables to mourn the expiry of the cheerful day, a shepherd boy, belonging to a farmer in the immediate neighbourhood of Alloway Kirk, had just folded his charge, and was returning home. As he passed the Kirk, in the adjoining field, he fell in with a crew of men and women, who were busy pulling stems of the plant Ragwort. He observed, that as each person pulled a Ragwort, he or she got astride of it and called out, "Up, horsie!" on which the Ragwort flew off, like Pegasus, through the air with its rider. The foolish boy likewise pulled his Ragwort, and cried, with the rest, "Up, horsie!" and, strange to tell, away he flew with the company. The first stage at which the cavalcade stopped, was a merchant's wine cellar in Bordeaux, where, without saying, by your leave, they quaffed away at the best the cellar could afford, until the morning—foe to the imps and works of darkness—threatened to throw light on the matter, and frightened them from their carousals.

The poor shepherd lad, being equally a stranger to the scene and the liquor, heedlessly got himself drunk; and when the rest took horse, he fell asleep and was found so next day by some of the people belonging to the merchant. Somebody who understood Scotch, asking him what he was, he said he was such-a-one's herd in Alloway, and by some means or other getting home again, he lived long to tell the world the wondrous tale. I am, &c.—R. B.

CCII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

ANNAN WATER FOOT,
22d August, 1792.

Do not blame me for it, Madam; my own conscience, hackneyed and

weather-beaten as it is in watching and reproving my vagaries, follies, indolence, &c. has continued to punish me sufficiently. . . .

Do you think it possible, my dear and honoured friend, that I could be so lost to gratitude for many favours, to esteem for much worth, and to the honest, kind, pleasurable tie of, now, old acquaintance, and I hope and I am sure of progressive, increasing friendship, as for a single day not to think of you, to ask the Fates what they are doing and about to do with my much-loved friend and her wide-scattered connexions, and to beg of them to be as kind to you and yours as they possibly can?

Apropos (though how it is *apropos* I have not leisure to explain), do you know that I am almost in love with an acquaintance of yours?—Almost! said I?—I am in love; souse! over head and ears, deep as the most unfathomable abyss of the boundless ocean: but the word Love, owing to the *intermingledoms* of the good and the bad, the pure and the impure, in this world, being rather an equivocal term for expressing one's sentiments and sensations, I must do justice to the sacred purity of my attachment. Know, then, that the heart-struck awe; the distant, humble approach; the delight we should have in gazing upon and listening to a Messenger of Heaven, appearing in all the unspotted purity of his celestial home among the coarse, polluted, far inferior sons of men, to deliver to them tidings that make their hearts swim in joy and their imaginations soar in transport—such, so delighting and so pure, were the emotions of my soul on meeting the other day with Miss Lesley Baillie, your neighbour, at Mayfield. Mr. B. with his two daughters, accompanied by Mr. H. of G., passing through Dumfries a few days ago, on their way to England, did me the honour of calling on me; on which I took

my horse (though God knows I could ill spare the time), and accompanied them fourteen or fifteen miles, and dined and spent the day with them.

'Twas about nine, I think, when I left them, and, riding home, I composed the following ballad, of which you will probably think you have a dear bargain, as it will cost you another groat of postage. You must know that there is an old ballad beginning with—

"My bonnie Lizie Baillie,
I'll rowe thee in my plaidie,"—&c.

So I parodied it as follows, which is literally the first copy, "unanoited, unanneal'd," as Hamlet says:—

"O saw ye bonnie Lesley,
As she gaed o'er the border?
She's gane, like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther."

So much for ballads. I regret that you are gone to the east country, as I am to be in Ayrshire in about a fortnight. This world of ours, notwithstanding it has many good things in it, yet it has ever had this curse, that two or three people, who would be the happier the oftener they met together, are, almost without exception, always so placed as never to meet but once or twice a year; which, considering the few years of a man's life, is a very great "evil under the sun," which I do not recollect that Solomon has mentioned in his catalogue of the miseries of man. I hope and believe that there is a state of existence beyond the grave, where the worthy of this life will renew their former intimacies, with this endearing addition, that "we meet to part no more!"

"Tell us, ye dead;
Will none of you in pity disclose the secret,
What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be?"

A thousand times have I made this apostrophe to the departed sons of men, but not one of them has ever thought fit to answer the question. "O that some courteous ghost would blab it out!" but it cannot be; you

and I, my friend, must make the experiment by ourselves, and for ourselves. However, I am so convinced that an unshaken faith in the doctrines of religion is not only necessary, by making us better men, but also by making us happier men, that I should take every care that your little godson, and every little creature that shall call me father, shall be taught them.

So ends this heterogeneous letter, written at this wild place of the world, in the intervals of my labour of discharging a vessel of rum from Antigua.—R. B.

CCIII.

TO MR. ALEX. CUNNINGHAM.

DUMFRIES, 10th September, 1792.

No! I will not attempt an apology. Amid all my hurry of business, grinding the faces of the publican and the sinner on the merciless wheels of the Excise; making ballads, and then drinking, and singing them; and, over and above all, the correcting the press-work of two different publications; still, still I might have stolen five minutes to dedicate to one of the first of my friends and fellow-creatures. I might have done, as I do at present, snatched an hour near "witching time of night," and scrawled a page or two. I might have congratulated my friend on his marriage; or I might have thanked the Caledonian Archers for the honour they have done me (though, to do myself justice, I intended to have done both in rhyme; else I had done both long ere now). Well, then, here is to your good health! for you must know I have set a nipperkin of toddy by me, just by way of spell, to keep away the meikle-horned Deil, or any of his subaltern imps who may be on their nightly rounds.

But what shall I write to you?

"The voice said, Cry," and I said, "What shall I cry?" O thou spirit! whatever thou art, or wherever thou makest thyself visible!—be thou a bogle by the eerie side of an auld thorn, in the dreary glen through which the herd-callaun maun bicker in his gloamin route frae the fauld!—Be thou a brownie, set, at dead of night, to thy task by the blazing ingle, or in the solitary barn, where the repercussions of thy iron flail half affright thyself, as thou performest the work of twenty of the sons of men, ere the cock-crowing summon thee to thy ample cog of substantial brose!—Be thou a kelpie, haunting the ford or ferry, in the starless night, mixing thy laughing yell with the howling of the storm and the roaring of the flood, as thou viewest the perils and miseries of man on the foundering horse, or in the tumbling boat!—or, lastly, be thou a ghost, paying thy nocturnal visits to the hoary ruins of decayed grandeur; or performing thy mystic rites in the shadow of the time-worn church, while the moon looks, without a cloud, on the silent, ghastly dwellings of the dead around thee; or, taking thy stand by the bedside of the villain or the murderer, portraying on his dreaming fancy pictures dreadful as the horrors of unveiled hell, and terrible as the wrath of incensed Deity!—Come, thou spirit, but not in these horrid forms; come with the milder, gentle, easy inspirations which thou breathest round the wig of a prating advocate, or the *tête* of a tea-sipping gossip, while their tongues run at the light-horse gallop of clishmaclaver for ever and ever; come and assist a poor devil who is quite jaded in the attempt to share half an idea among half a hundred words, to fill up four quarto pages, while he has not got one single sentence of recollection, information, or remark worth putting pen to paper for.

I feel, I feel the presence of supernatural assistance! Circled in the embrace of my elbow-chair, my breast labours, like the bloated Sybil on her three-footed stool, and, like her too, labours with Nonsense. —Nonsense, auspicious name! Tutor, friend, and finger-post in the mystic mazes of law, the cadaverous paths of physic, and particularly in the sightless soarings of school divinity; who—leaving Common Sense confounded at his strength of pinion, Reason delirious with eyeing his giddy flight, and Truth creeping back into the bottom of her well, cursing the hour that ever she offered her scorned alliance to the wizard power of Theologic Vision—raves abroad on all the winds: “On earth Discord! a gloomy heaven above, opening her jealous gates to the nineteen-thousandth part of the tithe of mankind! and below, an inescapable and inexorable hell, expanding its leviathan jaws for the vast residue of mortals!!!” O doctrine comfortable and healing to the weary, wounded soul of man! Ye sons and daughters of affliction, ye *pauvres misérables*, to whom day brings no pleasure, and night yields no rest, be comforted! ‘Tis but *one* to nineteen hundred thousand that your situation will mend in this world. So, alas! the experience of the poor and needy too often affirms; and ‘tis nineteen hundred thousand to *one*, by the dogmas of Theology, that you will be damned eternally in the world to come!

But, of all Nonsense, Religious Nonsense is the most nonsensical; so enough, and more than enough of it. Only, by the by, will you, or can you, tell me, my dear Cunningham, why a sectarian turn of mind has always a tendency to narrow and illiberalize the heart? They are orderly; they may be just; nay, I have known them merciful; but

still your children of sanctity move among their fellow-creatures with a nostril snuffing putrescence and a foot spurning filth,—in short, with a conceited dignity that your titled Douglasses, Hamiltons, Gordons, or any other of your Scottish lordlings of seven centuries’ standing display, when they accidentally mix among the many-aproned sons of mechanical life. I remember, in my ploughboy days, I could not conceive it possible that a noble lord could be a fool, or a godly man could be a knave. How ignorant are ploughboys! Nay, I have since discovered that a *godly woman* may be a * * * * *!—But hold—Here’s t’ ye again—this rum is generous Antigua; so a very unfit menstruum for scandal.

Apropos, how do you like—I mean *really* like—the married life? Ah, my friend, matrimony is quite a different thing from what your love-sick youths and sighing girls take it to be! But marriage, we are told, is appointed by God, and I shall never quarrel with any of His institutions. I am a husband of older standing than you, and shall give you *my* ideas of the conjugal state (*en passant*—you know I am no Latinist—is not *conjugal* derived from *jugum*, a yoke?). Well, then, the scale of good wifeship I divide into ten parts:—Goodnature, four; Good Sense, two; Wit, one; Personal Charms, viz. a sweet face, eloquent eyes, fine limbs, graceful carriage (I would add a fine waist too, but that is so soon spoilt, you know), all these, one; as for the other qualities belonging to, or attending on, a wife, such as Fortune, Connexions, Education (I mean education extraordinary), Family Blood, &c., divide the two remaining degrees among them as you please; only remember that all these minor properties must be expressed by *fractions*, for there is not any one of them, in the aforesaid

scale, entitled to the dignity of an *integer*.

As for the rest of my fancies and reveries—how I lately met with Miss Lesley Baillie, the most beautiful, elegant woman in the world—how I accompanied her and her father's family fifteen miles on their journey, out of pure devotion, to admire the loveliness of the works of God in such an unequalled display of them—how, in galloping home at night, I made a ballad on her, of which these two stanzas make a part—

Thou, bonie Lesley, art a queen,
Thy subjects we before thee;
Thou, bonie Lesley, art divine,
The hearts o' men adore thee.

The very Deil he could na scathe
Whatever wad belang thee!
He'd look into thy bonie face
And say, "I canna wrang thee."

—behold all these things are written in the chronicles of my imaginations, and shall be read by thee, my dear friend, and by thy beloved spouse, my other dear friend, at a more convenient season.

Now, to thee, and to thy before-designed *bosom*-companion, be given the precious things brought forth by the sun, and the precious things brought forth by the moon, and the benignant influences of the stars, and the living streams which flow from the fountains of life, and by the tree of life for ever and ever! Amen.—R. B.

CCIV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

DUMFRIES, 24th September, 1792.

I HAVE this moment, my dear Madam, yours of the 23d. All your other kind reproaches, your news, &c., are out of my head when I read and think on Mrs. Henri's situation. Good God! a heart-wounded, helpless young woman in a strange, foreign land, and that land convulsed with every horror that can

harrow the human feelings—sick—looking, longing for a comforter, but finding none—a mother's feelings, too;—but it is too much: He who wounded (He only can), may He heal!

I wish the farmer great joy of his new acquisition to his family. I cannot say that I give him joy of his life as a farmer. 'Tis, as a farmer paying a dear, unconscionable rent, a *cursed life*!—As to a laird farming his own property; sowing his own corn in hope, and reaping it, in spite of brittle weather, in gladness; knowing that none can say unto him, 'What dost thou?' fattening his herds; shearing his flocks; rejoicing at Christmas; and begetting sons and daughters, until he be the venerated, grey-haired leader of a little tribe—'tis a heavenly life! but devil take the life of reaping the fruits that another must eat.

Well, your kind wishes will be gratified, as to seeing me when I make my Ayrshire visit. I cannot leave Mrs. B. until her nine months' race is run, which may perhaps be in three or four weeks. She, too, seems determined to make me the patriarchal leader of a band. However, if Heaven will be so obliging as to let me have them in the proportion of three boys to one girl, I shall be so much the more pleased. I hope, if I am spared with them, to show a set of boys that will do honour to my cares and name; but I am not equal to the task of rearing girls. Besides, I am too poor; a girl should always have a fortune. *Apropos*, your little godson is thriving charmingly, but is a very devil. He, though two years younger, has completely mastered his brother. Robert is indeed the mildest, gentlest creature I ever saw. He has a most surprising memory, and is quite the pride of his schoolmaster.

You know how readily we

into prattle upon a subject dear to our heart: you can excuse it. God bless you and yours!—R. B.

CCV.

TO THE SAME.

[*Supposed to have been written on the death of Mrs. Henri, her daughter.*]

[*October, 1792.*]

I HAD been from home, and did not receive your letter until my return the other day. What shall I say to comfort you, my much-valued, much-afflicted friend! I can but grieve with you; consolation I have none to offer, except that which religion holds out to the children of affliction.

Children of affliction!—how just the expression! and like every other family, they have matters among them which they hear, see, and feel in a serious, all-important manner, of which the world has not, nor cares to have, any idea. The world looks indifferently on, makes the passing remark, and proceeds to the next novel occurrence.

Alas, Madam! who would wish for many years? What is it but to drag existence until our joys gradually expire, and leave us in a night of misery: like the gloom which blots out the stars one by one from the face of night, and leaves us, without a ray of comfort, in the howling waste!

I am interrupted, and must leave off. You shall soon hear from me again.—R. B.

CCVI.

TO MISS FONTENELLE,

DUMFRIES.

MADAM,

In such a bad world as ours, those who add to the scanty sum of our pleasures are positively our

benefactors. To you, Madam, on our humble Dumfries boards, I have been more indebted for entertainment than ever I was in prouder theatres. Your charms as a woman would ensure applause to the most indifferent actress, and your theatrical talents would ensure admiration to the plainest figure. This, Madam, is not the unmeaning or insidious compliment of the frivolous or the interested: I pay it from the same honest impulse that the sublime in nature excites my admiration, or her beauties give me delight.

Will the foregoing lines ["The Rights of Woman: An Address"] be of any service to you in your approaching benefit-night? If they will, I shall be prouder of my muse than ever. They are nearly extempore: I know they have no great merit; but though they should add but little to the entertainment of the evening, they give me the happiness of an opportunity to declare how much I have the honour to be, &c.—R. B.

CCVII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

DUMFRIES, 6th December, 1792.

I SHALL be in Ayrshire, I think, next week; and, if at all possible, I shall certainly, my much esteemed friend, have the pleasure of visiting at Dunlop House.

Alas, Madam! how seldom do we meet in this world, that we have reason to congratulate ourselves on accessions of happiness! I have not passed half the ordinary term of an old man's life, and yet, I scarcely look over the obituary of a newspaper that I do not see some names that I have known, and which I, and other acquaintances, little thought to meet with there so soon. Every other instance of the mortality of our kind makes us cast an anxious

look into the dreadful abyss of uncertainty, and shudder with apprehension for our own fate. But of how different an importance are the lives of different individuals! Nay, of what importance is one period of the same life, more than another! A few years ago I could have laid down in the dust, "careless of the voice of the morning;" and now not a few, and these most helpless individuals, would, on losing me and my exertions, lose both their "staff and shield." By the way, these helpless ones have lately got an addition; Mrs. B. having given me a fine girl since I wrote you. There is a charming passage in Thomson's "Edward and Eleanora:"—

"The valiant, *in himself*, what can he suffer?
Or what need he regard his *single* woes?"—&c.

As I am got in the way of quotations, I shall give you another from the same piece, peculiarly—alas! too peculiarly—apposite, my dear Madam, your present frame of mind:—

"Who so unworthy but may proudly deck him
With his fair-weather virtue that exults
Glad o'er the summer main? the tempest comes;
The rough winds rage aloud; when from the
helm
This virtue shrinks, and in a corner lies
Lamenting.—Heavens! if privileged from trial
How cheap a thing were virtue!"

I do not remember to have heard you mention Thomson's dramas. I pick up favourite quotations, and store them in my mind as ready armour, offensive or defensive, amid the struggle of this turbulent existence. Of these is one, a very favourite one, from his "Alfred:"—

"Attach thee firmly to the virtuous deeds
And offices of life; to life itself,
With all its vain and transient joys, sit loose."

Probably I have quoted some of these to you formerly, as indeed, when I write from the heart, I am apt to be guilty of such repetitions. The compass of the heart, in the musical style of expression, is much more bounded than that of the

imagination; so the notes of the former are extremely apt to run into one another; but in return for the paucity of its compass, its few notes are much more sweet. I must still give you another quotation, which I am almost sure I have given you before, but I cannot resist the temptation. The subject is religion: speaking of its importance to mankind, the author says,

"'Tis this, my friend, that streaks our morning bright."

I see you are in for double postage, so I shall e'en scribble out t'other sheet. We in this country here have many alarms of the reforming, or rather the republican, spirit of your part of the kingdom. Indeed, we are a good deal in commotion ourselves. For me, I am a placeman, you know; a very humble one indeed, Heaven knows, but still so much as to gag me. What my private sentiments are, you will find out without an interpreter. . . .

I have taken up the subject, and the other day, for a pretty actress's benefit-night, I wrote an address, which I will give on the other page, called "The Rights of Woman."

I shall have the honour of receiving your criticisms in person at Dunlop.
R. B.

CCVIII.

TO MRS. WALTER RIDDELL,
WOODLEY PARK.

I WILL wait on you, my ever valued friend, but whether in the morning I am not sure. Sunday closes a period of our curst revenue business, and may probably keep me employed with my pen until noon. Fine employment for a poet's pen! There is a species of the human genus that I call the *gin-horse class*: what enviable dogs they are! Round and round and round they go. Mundell's ox, that drives his cotton-mill, is

their exact prototype—without an idea or wish beyond their circle—fat, sleek, stupid, patient, quiet, and contented; while here I sit, altogether Novemberish, a d—d *mélange* of fretfulness and melancholy; not enough of the one to rouse me to passion, nor of the other to repose me in torpor; my soul flouncing and fluttering round his tenement like a wild-finch, caught among the horrors of winter, and newly thrust into a cage. Well, I am persuaded that it was of me the Hebrew sage prophesied when he foretold: “And, behold, on whatsoever this man doth set his heart, it shall not prosper!” If my resentment is awakened, it is sure to be where it dare not squeak; and if— . . . Pray that wisdom and bliss be the frequent visitors of—R. B.

CCIX.

TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ.

OF FINTRY.

DUMFRIES, *December, 1792.*

Sir,

I have been surprised, confounded, and distracted by Mr. Mitchell, the collector, telling me that he has received an order from your Board to inquire into my political conduct, and blaming me as a person disaffected to Government

Sir, you are a husband—and a father. You know what you would feel to see the much-loved wife of your bosom, and your helpless, prattling little ones turned adrift into the world, degraded and disgraced from a situation in which they had been respectable and respected, and left almost without the necessary support of a miserable existence. Alas, Sir! must I think that such, soon, will be my lot! and from the d-mned, dark insinuations of hellish, groundless envy too! I believe, Sir, I may aver it, and in

the sight of Omniscience, that I would not tell a deliberate falsehood—no, not though even worse horrors, if worse can be, than those I have mentioned, hung over my head; and I say, that the allegation, whatever villain has made it, is a lie! To the British Constitution, on revolution principles, next after my God, I am most devoutly attached. You, Sir, have been much and generously my friend. Heaven knows how warmly I have felt the obligation, and how grateful; I have thanked you. Fortune, Sir, has made you powerful, and me impotent, has given you patronage, and me dependence. I would not for my single self call on your humanity; were such my insular, unconnected situation, I would despise the tear that now swells in my eye—I could brave misfortune, I could face ruin; for, at the worst, “Death’s thousand doors stand open:” but, good God! the tender concerns that I have mentioned, the claims and ties that I see at this moment, and feel around me, how they unnerve Courage, and wither Resolution! To your patronage, as a man of genius, you have allowed me a claim; and your esteem, as an honest man, I know is my due: to these, Sir, permit me to appeal; by these may I adjure you to save me from that misery which threatens to overwhelm me, and which, with my latest breath I will say it, I have not deserved.—R. B.

CCX

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

DUMFRIES, *31st December, 1792.*

DEAR MADAM,

A hurry of business, thrown in heaps by my absence, has until now prevented my returning my grateful acknowledgements to the good family of Dunlop, and you in

particular, for that hospitable kindness which rendered the four days I spent under that genial roof four of the pleasantest I ever enjoyed. Alas, my dearest friend! how few and fleeting are those things we call pleasures! On my road to Ayrshire, I spent a night with a friend whom I much valued, a man whose days promised to be many; and on Saturday last we laid him in the dust!

Jan. 2, 1793.

I HAVE just received yours of the 30th, and feel much for your situation. However, I heartily rejoice in your prospect of recovery from that vile jaundice. As to myself, I am better, though not quite free of my complaint. You must not think, as you seem to insinuate, that in my way of life I want exercise. Of that I have enough; but occasional hard drinking is the devil to me. Against this I have again and again bent my resolution, and have greatly succeeded. Taverns I have totally abandoned: it is the private parties in the family way, among the hard-drinking gentlemen of this country, that do me the mischief; but even this I have more than half given over.

Mr. Corbet can be of little service to me at present; at least I should be shy of applying. I cannot possibly be settled as a supervisor for several years. I must wait the rotation of the list, and there are twenty names before mine. I might indeed get a job of officiating, where a settled supervisor was ill, or aged; but that hauls me from my family, as I could not remove them on such an uncertainty. Besides, some envious, malicious devil has raised a little demur on my political principles, and I wish to let that matter settle before I offer myself too much in the eye of my supervisors. I have set, henceforth, a

seal on my lips as to these unlucky politics; but to you I must breathe my sentiments. In this, as in everything else, I shall show the undisguised emotions of my soul. War I deprecate; misery and ruin to thousands are in the blast that announces the destructive demon. But

5th January, 1793.

You see my hurried life, Madam; I can only command starts of time; however, I am glad of one thing; since I finished the other sheet, the political blast that threatened my welfare is overblown. I have corresponded with Commissioner Graham, for the Board had made me the subject of their animadversions; and now I have the pleasure of informing you that all is set to rights in that quarter. Now, as to these informers, may the devil be let loose to — But, hold! I was praying most fervently in my last sheet, and I must not so soon fall a-swearing in this.

Alas! how little do the wantonly or idly officious think what mischief they do by their malicious insinuations, indirect impertinence, or thoughtless blabbings. What a difference there is in intrinsic worth, candour, benevolence, generosity, kindness—in all the charities and all the virtues—between one class of human beings and another. For instance, the amiable circle I so lately mixed with in the hospitable hall of Dunlop—their generous hearts, their uncontaminated, dignified minds, their informed and polished understandings—what a contrast, when compared (if such comparing were not downright sacrilege) with the soul of the miscreant who can deliberately plot the destruction of an honest man that never offended him, and with a grin of satisfaction see the unfortunate being, his faithful wife, and prattling innocents, turned over to beggary and ruin!

Your cup, my dear Madam, arrived safe. I had two worthy fellows dining with me the other day, when I, with great formality, produced my whigmeeleerie cup, and told them that it had been a family-piece among the descendants of William Wallace. This roused such an enthusiasm, that they insisted on bumpering the punch round in it; and, by and by, never did your great ancestor lay a *Southron* more completely to rest, than for a time did your cup my two friends. *Apropos*, this is the season of wishing. May God bless you, my dear friend, and bless me, the humblest and sincerest of your friends, by granting you yet many returns of the season! May all good things attend you and yours, wherever they are scattered over the earth!—R. B.

CCXI.

TO MR. WILLIAM NICOL,
EDINBURGH.

[*In reply to a letter containing (according to Dr Currie) good advice.*]

DUMFRIES, 20th February, 1793.

O THOU, wisest among the wise, meridian blaze of prudence, full moon of discretion, and chief of many counsellors! How infinitely is thy puddle-headed, rattle-headed, wrong-headed, round-headed slave indebted to thy supereminent goodness, that from the luminous path of thy own right-lined rectitude thou lookest benignly down on an erring wretch, of whom the zigzag wanderings defy all the powers of calculation, from the simple copulation of units up to the hidden mysteries of fluxions! May one feeble ray of that light of wisdom which darts from thy sensorium, straight as the arrow of heaven, and bright as the meteor of inspiration, may it be my portion, so that I may be less unworthy of the face and favour of that father of proverbs, and master of maxims, that

antipode of folly, and magnet among sages, the wise and witty Willie Nicol! Amen! Amen! Yea, so be it!

For me, I am a beast, a reptile, and know nothing! From the cave of my ignorance, amid the fogs of my dulness, and pestilential fumes of my political heresies, I look up to thee, as doth a toad through the iron-barred lucerne of a pestiferous dungeon to the cloudless glory of a summer sun! Sorely sighing in bitterness of soul, I say, when shall my name be the quotation of the wise, and my countenance be the delight of the godly, like the illustrious lord of Laggan's many hills? As for him, his works are perfect: never did the pen of calumny blur the fair page of his reputation, nor the bolt of hatred fly at his dwelling. At his approach is the standing up of men, even the Chiefs and the Rulers; and before his presence the frail form of lovely Woman, humbly awaiting his pleasure, is extended on the dust.

Thou mirror of purity, when shall the elfine lamp of my glimmerous understanding, purged from sensual appetites and gross desires, shine like the constellation of thy intellectual powers? As for thee, thy thoughts are pure, and thy lips are holy. Never did the unhallowed breath of the powers of darkness, and the pleasures of darkness, pollute the sacred flame of thy sky-descended and heaven-bound desires: never did the vapours of impurity stain the unclouded serene of thy cerulean imagination. O that like thine were the tenor of my life, like thine were the tenor of my conversation! Then should no friend fear for my strength, no enemy rejoice in my weakness. Then should I lie down and rise up, and none to make me afraid. May thy pity and thy prayer be exercised for, O thou lamp of wisdom and mirror of morality! thy devoted slave.—R. B.

CCXII.

TO MRS. WALTER RIDDELL,
WOODLEY PARK.

[*In favour of a player's benefit.*]

DUMFRIES, Feb. 1793.

MADAM,

You were so very good as to promise me to honour my friend with your presence on his benefit-night. That night is fixed for Friday first: the play a most interesting one, "The way to keep Him." I have the pleasure to know Mr. G. well. His merit as an actor is generally acknowledged. He has genius and worth which would do honour to patronage: he is a poor and modest man; claims which from their very *silence* have the more forcible power on the generous heart. Alas, for pity! that from the indolence of those who have the good things of this life in their gift, too often does brazen-fronted importunity snatch that boon, the rightful due of retiring, humble want! Of all the qualities we assign to the Author and Director of Nature, by far the most enviable is to be able "to wipe away all tears from all eyes." O what insignificant, sordid wretches are they, however chance may have loaded them with wealth, who go to their graves, to their magnificent mausoleums, with hardly the consciousness of having made one poor honest heart happy!

But I crave your pardon, Madam; I came to beg, not to preach.—R. B.

CCXIII.

TO
THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

DUMFRIES, March, 1793.

MY LORD,

When you cast your eye on the name at the bottom of this letter,

and on the title-page of the book I do myself the honour to send your lordship, a more pleasurable feeling than my vanity tells me that it must be a name not entirely unknown to you. The generous patronage of your late illustrious brother found me in the lowest obscurity: he introduced my rustic muse to the partiality of my country; and to him I owe all. My sense of his goodness, and the anguish of my soul at losing my truly noble protector and friend, I have endeavoured to express in a poem to his memory, which I have now published. This edition is just from the press; and in my gratitude to the dead, and my respect for the living (fame belies you, my lord, if you possess not the same dignity of man which was your noble brother's characteristic feature), I had destined a copy for the Earl of Glencairn. I learnt just now that you are in town:—allow me to present it you.

I know, my lord, such is the vile, venal contagion which pervades the world of letters, that professions of respect from an author, particularly from a poet, to a lord, are more than suspicious. I claim my by-past conduct, and my feelings at this moment, as exceptions to the too just conclusion. Exalted as are the honours of your lordship's name, and unnoted as is the obscurity of mine, with the uprightness of an honest man, I come before your lordship with an offering—however humble, 'tis all I have to give—of my grateful respect; and to beg of you, my lord—'tis all I have to ask of you—that you will do me the honour to accept of it.

I have the honour to be,

R. B.

CCXIV.

TO MISS BENSON,
YORK.

Afterwards Mrs. Basil Montague.]

DUMFRIES, 21st March, 1793.

MADAM,

Among many things for which I envy those hale, long-lived old fellows before the Flood, is this in particular, that when they met with anybody after their own heart, they had a charming long prospect of many, many happy meetings with them in after-life.

Now, in this short, stormy, winter day of our fleeting existence, when you now and then, in the chapter of accidents, meet an individual whose acquaintance is a real acquisition, there are all the probabilities against you, that you shall never meet with that valued character more. On the other hand, brief as this miserable being is, it is none of the least of the miseries belonging to it, that if there is any miscreant whom you hate, or creature whom you despise, the ill run of the chances shall be so against you, that in the overtakings, turnings, and jostlings of life, pop! at some unlucky corner, eternally comes the wretch upon you, and will not allow your indignation or contempt a moment's repose. As I am a sturdy believer in the powers of darkness, I take these to be the doings of that old author of mischief, the Devil. It is well known that he has some kind of shorthand way of taking down our thoughts, and I make no doubt that he is perfectly acquainted with my sentiments respecting Miss Benson: how much I admired her abilities and valued her worth, and how very fortunate I thought myself in her acquaintance. For this last reason, my dear Madam, I must entertain no hopes of the very great pleasure of meeting with you again.

Miss Hamilton tells me that she is sending a packet to you, and I beg leave to send you the enclosed sonnet; though, to tell you the real truth, the sonnet is a mere pretence, that I may have the opportunity of declaring with how much respectful esteem I have the honour to be, &c.—R. B.

CCXV.

TO PATRICK MILLER, ESQ.
OF DALSWINTON.

DUMFRIES, April, 1793.

SIR,

My poems having just come out in another edition, will you do me the honour to accept of a copy? A mark of my gratitude to you, as a gentleman to whose goodness I have been much indebted; of my respect for you, as a patriot who, in a venal, sliding age, stands forth the champion of the liberties of my country; and of my veneration for you, as a man whose benevolence of heart does honour to human nature.

There was a time, Sir, when I was your dependent: this language *then* would have been like the vile incense of flattery—I could not have used it. Now that connexion is at an end, do me the honour to accept of this *honest* tribute of respect from, Sir,

Your much-indebted
humble Servant,
R. B.

CCXVI.

TO
JOHN FRANCIS ERSKINE, ESQ.
OF MAR.

[Afterwards Earl of Mar.]

DUMFRIES, 13th April, 1793.

SIR,

Degenerate as human nature is said to be; and, in many instances,

worthless and unprincipled it is ; still there are bright examples to the contrary—examples that even in the eyes of superior beings must shed a lustre on the name of Man.

Such an example have I now before me, when you, Sir, came forward to patronise and befriend a distant obscure stranger, merely because poverty had made him helpless, and his British hardihood of mind had provoked the arbitrary wantonness of power. My much-esteemed friend, Mr. Riddell of Glenriddell, has just read me a paragraph of a letter he had from you. Accept, Sir, of the silent throb of gratitude ; for words would but mock the emotions of my soul.

You have been misinformed as to my final dismission from the Excise : I am still in the service. Indeed, but for the exertions of a gentleman who must be known to you, Mr. Graham of Fintry, a gentleman who has ever been my warm and generous friend, I had, without so much as a hearing, or the slightest previous intimation, been turned adrift, with my helpless family, to all the horrors of want. Had I had any other resource, probably I might have saved them the trouble of a dismission ; but the little money I gained by my publication is almost every guinea embarked to save from ruin an only brother, who, though one of the worthiest, is by no means one of the most fortunate, of men.

In my defence to their accusations I said, that whatever might be my sentiments of republics, ancient or modern, as to Britain I abjured the idea : that a constitution, which, in its original principles, experience had proved to be every way fitted for our happiness in society, it would be insanity to sacrifice to an untried visionary theory : that, in consideration of my being situated in a department, however humble, immediately

in the hands of people in power, I had forborne taking any active part, either personally or as an author, in the present business of Reform ; but that, where I must declare my sentiments, I would say there existed a system of corruption between the executive power and the representative part of the Legislature, which boded no good to our glorious constitution, and which every patriotic Briton must wish to see amended. Some such sentiments as these I stated in a letter to my generous patron Mr. Graham, which he laid before the Board at large ; where, it seems, my last remark gave great offence ; and one of our supervisors general, a Mr. Corbet, was instructed to inquire on the spot, and to document me—“that my business was to act, *not to think* ; and that whatever might be men or measures, it was for me to be *silent and obedient*.”

Mr. Corbet was likewise my steady friend ; so, between Mr. Graham and him, I have been partly forgiven ; only I understand that all hopes of my getting officially forward are blasted.

Now, Sir, to the business in which I would more immediately interest you. The partiality of my countrymen has brought me forward as a man of genius, and has given me a character to support. In the poet I have avowed manly and independent sentiments, which I trust will be found in the man. Reasons of no less weight than the support of a wife and family have pointed out as the eligible, and, situated as I was, the only eligible line of life for me, my present occupation. Still my honest fame is my dearest concern ; and a thousand times have I trembled at the idea of those *degrading* epithets that malice or misrepresentation may affix to my name. I have often, in blasting anticipation, listened to some future hackney scribbler, with the heavy

malice of savage stupidity, exulting in his hireling paragraphs: "Burns, notwithstanding the *fanfaronade* of independence to be found in his works, and after having been held forth to public view and to public estimation as a man of some genius, yet, quite destitute of resources within himself to support his borrowed dignity, has dwindled into a paltry exciseman, and slunk out the rest of his insignificant existence in the meanest of pursuits, and among the vilest of mankind."

In your illustrious hands, Sir, permit me to lodge my disavowal and defiance of these slanderous falsehoods. Burns was a poor man from birth, and an exciseman by necessity;—but—I *will* say it!—the sterling of his honest worth no poverty could debase, and his independent British mind oppression might bend, but could not subdue. Have not I, to me, a more precious stake in my country's welfare than the richest dukedom in it? I have a large family of children, and the prospect of many more. I have three sons, who, I see already, have brought into the world souls ill qualified to inhabit the bodies of slaves. Can I look tamely on, and see any machination to wrest from them the birthright of my boys—the little independent Britons, in whose veins runs my own blood? No! I will not! should my heart's blood stream around my attempt to defend it!

Does any man tell me, that my full efforts can be of no service; and that it does not belong to my humble station to meddle with the concerns of a nation?

I can tell him, that it is on such individuals as I that a nation has to rest, both for the hand of support and the eye of intelligence. The uninformed mob may swell a nation's bulk; and the titled, tinsel, courtly throng may be its feathered orna-

ment; but the number of those who are elevated enough in life to reason and to reflect, yet low enough to keep clear of the venal contagion of a court—these are a nation's strength.

I know not how to apologize for the impertinent length of this epistle; but one small request I must ask of you farther.—When you have honoured this letter with a perusal, please to commit it to the flames. Burns, in whose behalf you have so generously interested yourself, I have here, in his native colours, drawn *as he is*, but should any of the people in whose hands is the very bread he eats get the least knowledge of the picture, *it would ruin the poor BARD for ever!*

My poems having just come out in another edition, I beg leave to present you with a copy as a small mark of that high esteem and ardent gratitude with which I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your deeply indebted
And ever devoted humble Servant,
R. B.

CCXVII.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

April 26, 1793.

I AM *disappointed* out of humour, my dear Ainslie, and that is the reason why I take up the pen to you: 'tis the nearest way (*probatum est*) to recover my spirits again.

I received your last, and was much entertained with it; but I will not at this time, nor at any other time, answer it. Answer a letter? I never could answer a letter in my life! I have written many a letter in return for letters I have received; but then they were original matter—spurt-away! zig, here; zag, there; as if the devil that, my grannie (an old woman indeed) often told me, rode on will-o'-wisp, or, in her more classic phrase, Spunkie, were looking

over my elbow.—Happy thought that idea has engendered in my head: Spunkie, thou shalt henceforth be my symbol, signature, and tutelary genius! Like thee, hap-step-and-lowp, here-awa-there-awa, higglety-pigglety, pell-mell, hither-and-yon, ram-stam, happy-go-lucky, up-tails-a'-by-the-light-o'-the-moon, has been, is, and shall be, my progress through the mosses and moors of this vile, bleak, barren wilderness of a life of ours.

Come, then, my guardian spirit! like thee, may I skip away, amusing myself by and at my own light: and if any opaque-souled lubber of mankind complain that my elfine, lambent, glimmerous wanderings have misled his stupid steps over precipices, or into bogs; let the thick-headed Blunderbuss recollect, that he is not Spunkie; that

Spunkie's wanderings could not copied be:
Amid these perils none durst walk but he.

* * * *

I have no doubt but scholarcraft may be caught, as a Scotsman catches the itch—by friction. How else can you account for it, that born blockheads, by mere dint of *handling* books, grow so wise that even they themselves are equally convinced of and surprised at their own parts? I once carried this philosophy to that degree, that in a knot of country folks who had a library amongst them, and who, to the honour of their good sense, made me factotum in the business, one of our members,—a little, wise-looking, squat, upright, jabbering body of a tailor,—I advised him, instead of turning over the leaves, *to bind the book on his back*. Johnnie took the hint; and as our meetings were every fourth Saturday, and Pricklouse having a good Scots mile to walk in coming, and, of course, another in returning, Bodkin was sure to lay his hand on some heavy quarto, or ponderous folio, with and under

which, wrapt up in his grey plaid, he grew wise, as he grew weary, all the way home. He carried this so far, that an old musty Hebrew concordance, which we had in a present from a neighbouring priest, by mere dint of applying it, as doctors do a blistering plaster, between his shoulders, Stitch, in a dozen pilgrimages, acquired as much rational theology as the said priest had done by forty years' perusal of the pages.

Tell me, and tell me truly, what you think of this theory.

Yours,
SPUNKIE.

CCXVIII.

TO MISS HELEN CRAIK,

ARBIEGLAND.

DUMFRIES, *August, 1793.*

MADAM,

I enclose you two of my late pieces, as some kind of return for the pleasure I have received in perusing a certain MS. volume of poems in the possession of Captain Riddell. To repay one with an *old song* is a proverb whose force you, Madam, I know, will not allow. What is said of illustrious descent is, I believe, equally true of a talent for poetry—none ever despised it who had pretensions to it. The fates and characters of the rhyming tribe often employ my thoughts when I am disposed to be melancholy. There is not, among all the martyrologies that ever were penned, so rueful a narrative as the lives of the poets. In the comparative view of wretches, the criterion is not what they are doomed to suffer, but how they are formed to bear. Take a being of our kind; give him a stronger imagination and a more delicate sensibility, which between them will ever engender a more ungovernable set of passions than are the usual lot of man; implant in him an irresistible impulse to some

idle vagary, such as arranging wild flowers in fantastical nosegays, tracing the grasshopper to his haunt by his chirping song, watching the frisks of the little minnows in the sunny pool, or hunting after the intrigues of butterflies—in short, send him adrift after some pursuit which shall eternally mislead him from the paths of lucre, and yet, curse him with a keener relish than any man living for the pleasures that lucre can purchase; lastly, fill up the measure of his woes by bestowing on him a spurning sense of his own dignity; and you have created a wight nearly as miserable as a poet. To you, Madam, I need not recount the fairy pleasures the Muse bestows to counterbalance this catalogue of evils. Bewitching poetry is like bewitching woman; she has in all ages been accused of misleading mankind from the councils of wisdom and the paths of prudence, involving them in difficulties, bating them with poverty, branding them with infamy, and plunging them in the whirling vortex of ruin: yet, where is the man but must own that all our happiness on earth is not worthy the name; that even the holy hermit's solitary prospect of paradisaical bliss is but the glitter of a northern sun rising over a frozen region, compared with the many pleasures, the nameless raptures, that we owe to the lovely Queen of the heart of Man!—R. B.

CCXIX.

TO MRS. RIDDELL,
WOODLEY PARK.

[November, 1793.]

DEAR MADAM,

I meant to have called on you yesternight, but as I edged up to your box-door, the first object which greeted my view was one of those lobster-coated puppies, sitting like another dragon, guarding the

Hesperian fruit. On the conditions and capitulations you so obligingly offer, I shall certainly make my weather-beaten rustic phiz a part of your box-furniture on Tuesday; when we may arrange the business of the visit.

Among the profusion of idle compliments which insidious craft, or unmeaning folly, incessantly offer at your shrine—a shrine, how far exalted above such adoration!—permit me, were it but for rarity's sake, to pay you the honest tribute of a warm heart and an independent mind; and to assure you that I am, thou most [amiable and most accomplished of thy sex, with the most respectful esteem and fervent regard, thine, &c.

R. B.

CCXX.

TO JOHN McMURDO, ESQ.

DUMFRIES, December 1793.

SIR,

It is said that we take the greatest liberties with our greatest friends, and I pay myself a very high compliment in the manner in which I am going to apply the remark. I have owed you money longer than ever I owed it to any man. Here is Ker's account, and here are six guineas; and now I don't owe a shilling to man—or woman either. But for these damned dirty, dog's-ear'd little pages [Scottish banknotes], I had done myself the honour to have waited on you long ago. Independent of the obligations your hospitality has laid me under, the consciousness of your superiority in the rank of man and gentleman of itself was fully as much as I could ever make head against; but to owe you money too was more than I could face.

I think I once mentioned something of a collection of Scots songs

I have for some years been making : I send you a perusal of what I have got together. I could not conveniently spare them above five or six days, and five or six glances of them will probably more than suffice you. A very few of them are my own. When you are tired of them, please leave them with Mr. Clint, of the King's Arms. There is not another copy of the collection in the world; and I should be sorry that any unfortunate negligence should deprive me of what has cost me a good deal of pains.

R. B.

CCXXI.

TO CAPTAIN [ROBERTSON
OF LUDE?].

DUMFRIES, 5th December, 1793.

SIR,

Heated as I was with wine yesternight, I was perhaps rather seemingly impertinent in my anxious wish to be honoured with your acquaintance. You will forgive it: it was the impulse of heart-felt respect. "He is the father of the Scottish county reform, and is a man who does honour to the business at the same time that the business does honour to him," said my worthy friend Glenriddell to somebody by me who was talking of your coming to this country with your corps. "Then," I said, "I have a woman's longing to take him by the hand, and say to him, 'Sir, I honour you as a man to whom the interests of humanity are dear, and as a patriot to whom the rights of your country are sacred.'"

In times like these, Sir, when our commoners are barely able by the glimmer of their own twilight understandings to scrawl a frank, and when lords are what gentlemen would be ashamed to be, to whom shall a sinking country call for help? To the independent country gentleman!

To him who has too deep a stake in his country not to be in earnest for her welfare, and who in the honest pride of man can view with equal contempt the insolence of office and the allurements of corruption.

I mentioned to you a Scots ode or song I had lately composed, and which I think has some merit. Allow me to enclose it. When I fall in with you at the theatre, I shall be glad to have your opinion of it. Accept of it, Sir, as a very humble but most sincere tribute of respect from a man who, dear as he prizes poetic fame, yet holds dearer an independent mind.

I have the honour to be,

R. B.

CCXXII.

TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

[With a copy of Bruce's address to his troops at Bannockburn.]

DUMFRIES, 12th January, 1794.

MY LORD,

Will your lordship allow me to present you with the enclosed little composition of mine, as a small tribute of gratitude for the acquaintance with which you have been pleased to honour me. Independent of my enthusiasm as a Scotsman, I have rarely met with anything in history which interests my feelings as a man equal with the story of Bannockburn. On the one hand, a cruel but able usurper, leading on the finest army in Europe to extinguish the last spark of freedom among a greatly daring and greatly injured people; on the other hand, the desperate relics of a gallant nation devoting themselves to rescue their bleeding country, or perish with her.

Liberty! thou art a prize truly and indeed invaluable; for never canst thou be too dearly bought!

If my little Ode has the honour of

your Lordship's approbation, it will gratify my highest ambition.—I have the honour to be, &c.

R. B.

CCXXIII.

TO

MR. SAMUEL CLARK, JUN,

DUMFRIES.

Sunday Morning [Jan. 1794.]

DEAR SIR,

I was, I know, drunk last night, but I am sober this morning. From the expressions Capt. Dods made use of to me, had I had nobody's welfare to care for but my own, we should certainly have come, according to the manners of the world, to the necessity of murdering one another about the business. The words were such as generally, I believe, end in a brace of pistols; but I am still pleased to think that I did not ruin the peace and welfare of a wife and a family of children in a drunken squabble. Further, you know that the report of certain political opinions being mine has already once before brought me to the brink of destruction. I dread lest last night's business may be misrepresented in the same way. You, I beg, will take care to prevent it. I tax your wish for Mrs. Burns's welfare with the task of waiting as soon as possible on every gentleman who was present, and state this to him, and, as you please, show him this letter. What, after all, was the obnoxious toast? "May our success in the present war be equal to the justice of our cause"—a toast that the most outrageous frenzy of loyalty cannot object to. I request and beg that this morning you will wait on the parties present at the foolish dispute. I shall only add, that I am truly sorry that a man who stood so high in my estimation as Mr. Dods should use me in the manner in which I conceive he has done.—R. B.

CCXXIV.

TO MRS. RIDDELL,

WOODLEY PARK.

DUMFRIES, *Jan. 1794.*

MADAM,

I daresay that this is the first epistle you ever received from this nether world. I write you from the regions of hell, amid the horrors of the damned. The time and manner of my leaving your earth I do not exactly know, as I took my departure in the heat of a fever of intoxication, contracted at your too hospitable mansion; but, on my arrival here, I was fairly tried, and sentenced to endure the purgatorial tortures of this infernal confine for the space of ninety-nine years, eleven months, and twenty-nine days, and all on account of the impropriety of my conduct yesternight under your roof. Here am I, laid on a bed of pitiless furze, with my aching head reclined on a pillow of ever-piercing thorn, while an infernal tormentor, wrinkled, and old, and cruel—his name I think is *Recollection*—with a whip of scorpions, forbids peace or rest to approach me, and keeps anguish eternally awake. Still, Madam, if I could in any measure be reinstated in the good opinion of the fair circle whom my conduct last night so much injured, I think it would be an alleviation to my torments. For this reason I trouble you with this letter. To the men of the company I will make no apology. Your husband, who insisted on my drinking more than I chose, has no right to blame me; and the other gentlemen were partakers of my guilt. But to you, Madam, I have much to apologize. Your good opinion I valued as one of the greatest acquisitions I had made on earth, and I was truly a beast to forfeit it. There was a Miss J— too, a woman of fine sense, gentle and unassuming manners—do make, on

my part, a miserable d-mned wretch's best apology to her. A Mrs. G——, a charming woman, did me the honour to be prejudiced in my favour; this makes me hope that I have not outraged her beyond all forgiveness. To all the other ladies please present my humblest contrition for my conduct, and my petition for their gracious pardon. O all ye powers of decency and decorum! whisper to them that my errors, though great, were involuntary—that an intoxicated man is the vilest of beasts—that it was not in my nature to be brutal to any one—that to be rude to a woman, when in my senses, was impossible with me—but—

* * * * *

Regret! Remorse! Shame! ye three hellhounds that ever dog my steps and bay at my heels, spare me! spare me!

Forgive the offences, and pity the perdition of, Madam,

Your humble Slave,
R. B.

CCXXV.

TO THE SAME.

DUMFRIES, 1794.

MADAM,

I return your common-place book. I have perused it with much pleasure, and would have continued my criticisms; but as it seems the critic has forfeited your esteem, his strictures must lose their value.

If it is true that "offences come only from the heart," before you I am guiltless. To admire, esteem, and prize you as the most accomplished of women and the first of friends—if these are crimes, I am the most offending thing alive.

In a face where I used to meet the kind complacency of friendly confidence, *now* to find cold neglect and contemptuous scorn, is a wrench that my heart can ill bear. It is, however, some kind of miserable

good luck, that while *de-haut-en-bas* rigour may depress an unoffending wretch to the ground, it has a tendency to rouse a stubborn something in his bosom, which, though it cannot heal the wounds of his soul, is at least an opiate to blunt their poignancy.

With the profoundest respect for your abilities; the most sincere esteem, and ardent regard, for your gentle heart and amiable manners; and the most fervent wish and prayer for your welfare, peace, and bliss, I have the honour to be, Madam,

Your most devoted humble Servant,
R. B.

CCXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

DUMFRIES, 1794.

I HAVE this very moment got the song from Syme, and I am sorry to see that he has spoilt it a good deal. It shall be a lesson to me how I lend him anything again.

I have sent you "Werter," truly happy to have any—the smallest opportunity of obliging you.

'Tis true, Madam, I saw you once since I was at Woodley Park; and that once froze the very life-blood of my heart. Your reception of me was such, that a wretch meeting the eye of his judge, about to pronounce sentence of death on him, could only have envied my feelings and situation. But I hate the theme, and never more shall write or speak on it.

One thing I shall proudly say, that I can pay Mrs. R. a higher tribute of esteem, and appreciate her amiable worth more truly, than any man whom I have seen approach her; nor will I yield the *pas* to any man living, in subscribing myself with the sincerest truth, her devoted humble servt.,

R. B.

CCXXVII.

TO MR. ALEX. CUNNINGHAM,
EDINBURGH.

DUMFRIES, 25th February, 1794.

CANST thou minister to a mind diseased? Canst thou speak peace and rest to a soul tossed on a sea of troubles, without one friendly star to guide her course, and dreading that the next surge may overwhelm her? Canst thou give to a frame, trembling under the tortures of suspense, the stability and hardihood of the rock that braves the blast? If thou canst not do the least of these, why wouldst thou disturb me in my miseries, with thy inquiries after me?

For these two months I have not been able to lift a pen. My constitution and frame were, *ab origine*, blasted with a deep incurable taint of hypochondria, which poisons my existence. Of late a number of domestic vexations, and some pecuniary share in the ruin of these cursed times—losses which, though trifling, were yet what I could ill bear—have so irritated me, that my feelings at times could only be envied by a reprobate spirit listening to the sentence that dooms it to perdition.

Are you deep in the language of consolation? I have exhausted in reflection every topic of comfort. *A heart at ease* would have been charmed with my sentiments and reasonings; but as to myself, I was like Judas Iscariot preaching the Gospel: he might melt and mould the hearts of those around him, but his own kept its native incorrigibility.

Still there are two great pillars that bear us up, amid the wreck of misfortune and misery. The one is composed of the different modifications of a certain noble, stubborn something in man, known by the

names of courage, fortitude, magnanimity. The other is made up of those feelings and sentiments which, however the sceptic may deny them or the enthusiast disfigure them, are yet, I am convinced, original and component parts of the human soul; those *senses of the mind*, if I may be allowed the expression, which connect us with, and link us to, those awful obscure realities—an all-powerful and equally beneficent God, and a world to come, beyond death and the grave. The first gives the nerve of combat, while a ray of hope beams on the field: the last pours the balm of comfort into the wound which time can never cure.

I do not remember, my dear Cunningham, that you and I ever talked on the subject of religion at all. I know some who laugh at it, as the trick of the crafty few, to lead the undiscerning many; or at most as an uncertain obscurity, which mankind can never know anything of, and with which they are fools if they give themselves much to do. Nor would I quarrel with a man for his irreligion, any more than I would for his want of musical ear. I would regret that he was shut out from what, to me and to others, were such superlative sources of enjoyment. It is in this point of view, and for this reason, that I will deeply imbue the mind of every child of mine with religion. If my son should happen to be a man of feeling, sentiment, and taste, I shall thus add largely to his enjoyments. Let me flatter myself that this sweet little fellow, who is just now running about my desk, will be a man of a melting, ardent, glowing heart, and an imagination deluged with the painter and rapt with the poet. Let me figure him wandering out in a sweet evening, to inhale the balmy gales, and enjoy the growing luxuriance of the spring; himself the

while in the blooming youth of life. He looks abroad on all nature, and through nature up to nature's God. His soul, by swift delighting degrees, is rapt above the sublunary sphere, until he can be silent no longer, and bursts out into the glorious enthusiasm of Thomson—

"These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God.—The rolling year
Is full of Thee!"

and so on in all the spirit and ardour of that charming hymn. These are no ideal pleasures, they are real delights; and I ask, what of the delights among the sons of men are superior, not to say equal, to them? And they have this precious, vast addition, that conscious virtue stamps them for her own, and lays hold on them to bring herself into the presence of a witnessing, judging, and approving God.—R. B.

CCXXVIII.

TO

MR. ALEX. CUNNINGHAM,
EDINBURGH.

3d March, 1794.

SINCE I wrote to you the last lugubrious sheet, I have not had time to write you further. When I say that I had not time, that, as usual, means, that the three demons, indolence, business, and ennui, have so completely shared my hours among them, as not to leave me a five minutes' fragment to take up a pen in.

Thank Heaven, I feel my spirits buoying upwards with the renovating year. Now I shall in good earnest take up Thomson's songs. I daresay he thinks I have used him unkindly, and I must own with too much appearance of truth. *Apropos*, do you know the much-admired old Highland air called "The Sutor's

Dochter?" It is a first-rate favourite of mine, and I have written what I reckon one of my best songs to it. I will send it to you as it was sung with great applause in some fashionable circles by Major Robertson, of Lude, who was here with his corps.

There is one commission that I must trouble you with. I lately lost a valuable seal, a present from a departed friend, which vexes me much.

I have gotten one of your Highland pebbles, which I fancy would make a very decent one; and I want to cut my armorial bearing on it; will you be so obliging as inquire what will be the expense of such a business? I do not know that my name is matriculated, as the heralds call it, at all; but I have invented arms for myself,—so you know I shall be chief of the name; and, by courtesy of Scotland, will likewise be entitled to supporters. These, however, I do not intend having on my seal. I am a bit of a herald, and shall give you, *secundum artem*, my arms. On a field azure a holly bush, seeded, proper, in base; a shepherd's pipe and crook, saltier-wise, also proper, in chief. On a wreath of the colours a woodlark perching on a sprig of bay-tree, proper, for crest. Two mottoes: round the top of the crest, "Wood-notes wild;" at the bottom of the shield, in the usual place, "Better a wee bush than nae field." By the shepherd's pipe and crook I do not mean the nonsense of painters of Arcadia, but a "Stock and Horn," and a "Club," such as you see at the head of Allan Ramsay, in Allan's quarto edition of the "Gentle Shepherd." By the by, do you know Allan? He must be a man of very great genius.—Why is he not more known? Has he no patrons? or do "poverty's cold wind and crushing rain beat keen and heavy" on him? I once, and but once, got a



M^{rs} BURNS
(LIEUTENANT)



D^r MOORE



CAPTAIN FRANCIS GROSE F.R.S.



M^{rs} DUNLOP or DUNLOP



glance of that noble edition of the noblest pastoral in the world; and dear as it was—I mean, dear as to my pocket—I would have bought it; but I was told that it was printed and engraved for subscribers only. He is the *only* artist who has hit *genuine* pastoral costume. What, my dear Cunningham, is there in riches, that they narrow and harden the heart so? I think, that were I as rich as the sun, I should be as generous as the day; but as I have no reason to imagine my soul a nobler one than any other man's, I must conclude that wealth imparts a bird-lime quality to the possessor, at which the man, in his native poverty, would have revolted. What has led me to this is the idea of such merit as Mr. Allan possesses, and such riches as a nabob or government contractor possesses, and why they do not form a mutual league. Let wealth shelter and cherish unprotected merit, and the gratitude and celebrity of that merit will richly repay the outlay.—R. B.

CCXXIX.

TO MISS LAWRIE.

DUMFRIES, *May*, 1794.

MADAM,

Nothing short of a kind of absolute necessity could have made me trouble you with this letter. Except my ardent and just esteem for your sense, taste, and worth, every sentiment arising in my breast, as I put pen to paper to you, is painful. The scenes I have passed with the friend of my soul and his amiable connexions! the wrench at my heart to think that he is gone, for ever gone from me, never more to meet in the wanderings of a weary world! and the cutting reflection of all, that I had most unfortunately, though most undeservedly, lost the

confidence of that soul of worth, ere it took its flight!

These, Madam, are sensations of no ordinary anguish. However, you also may be offended with some *imputed* improprieties of mine: sensibility you know I possess, and sincerity none will deny me.

To oppose those prejudices which have been raised against me is not the business of this letter. Indeed it is a warfare I know not how to wage. The powers of positive vice I can in some degree calculate, and against direct malevolence I can be on my guard; but who can estimate the fatuity of giddy caprice, or ward off the unthinking mischief of precipitate folly.

I have a favour to request of you, Madam; and of your sister Mrs. Riddell, through your means. You know that, at the wish of my late friend, I made a collection of all my trifles in verse which I had ever written. They are many of them local, some of them puerile and silly, and all of them unfit for the public eye. As I have some little fame at stake—a fame that I trust may live when the hate of those who “watch for my halting,” and the contumelious sneer of those whom accident has made my superiors, will, with themselves, be gone to the regions of oblivion—I am uneasy now for the fate of those manuscripts. Will Mrs. Riddell have the goodness to destroy them, or return them to me? As a pledge of friendship they were bestowed; and that circumstance indeed was all their merit. Most unhappily for me, that merit they no longer possess; and I hope that Mrs. Riddell's goodness, which I well know, and ever will revere, will not refuse this favour to a man whom she once held in some degree of estimation.

With the sincerest esteem, I have the honour to be, Madam, &c.

R. B.

CCXXX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

CASTLE DOUGLAS, 25th June, 1794

HERE in a solitary inn, in a solitary village, am I set by myself, to amuse my brooding fancy as I may. Solitary confinement, you know, is Howard's favourite idea of reclaiming sinners; so let me consider by what fatality it happens that I have so long been exceeding sinful as to neglect the correspondence of the most valued friend I have on earth. To tell you that I have been in poor health will not be excuse enough, though it is true. I am afraid that I am about to suffer for the follies of my youth. My medical friends threaten me with a flying gout; but I trust they are mistaken.

I am just going to trouble your critical patience with the first sketch of a stanza I have been framing as I passed along the road. The subject is Liberty: you know, my honoured friend, how dear the theme is to me. I design it an irregular ode for General Washington's birthday. After having mentioned the degeneracy of other kingdoms I come to Scotland thus:—

"Thee, Caledonia, thy wild heaths among,
Thee, famed for martial deed and sacred song,
To thee I turn with swimming eyes;
Where is that soul of freedom fled?
Immingled with the mighty dead,
Beneath the hallowed turf where Wallace
lies!
Hear it not, Wallace, in thy bed of death:
Ye babbling winds, in silence sweep;
Disturb ye not the hero's sleep."

With the additions of—

"Behold that eye which shot immortal hate,
Braved usurpation's boldest daring;
That arm which, nerved with thundering fate,
Crushed the despot's proudest bearing!
One quenched in darkness like the sinking
star,
And one the palsied arm of tottering, power-
less age."

You will probably have another scrawl from me in a stage or two.—R. B.

CCXXXI.

TO PATRICK MILLER,
JUN., ESQ., M.P.

DUMFRIES, November, 1794.

DEAR SIR,

Your offer is indeed truly generous, and most sincerely do I thank you for it; but in my present situation I find that I dare not accept it. You well know my political sentiments; and were I an insular individual, unconnected with a wife and a family of children, with the most fervid enthusiasm I would have volunteered my services: I then could and would have despised all consequences that might have ensued.

My prospect in the Excise is something; at least, it is, encumbered as I am with the welfare, the very existence, of near half a score of helpless individuals, what I dare not sport with.

In the mean time they are most welcome to my Ode; only let them insert it as a thing they have met with by accident and unknown to me. Nay, if Mr. Perry, whose honour, after your character of him, I cannot doubt; if he will give me an address and channel by which anything will come safe from those spies with which he may be certain that his correspondence is beset, I will now and then send him any bagatelle that I may write. In the present hurry of Europe nothing but news and politics will be regarded; but against the days of peace, which Heaven send soon, my little assistance may perhaps fill up an idle column of a newspaper. I have long had it in my head to try my hand in the way of little prose essays, which I propose sending into the world through the medium of some newspaper; and should these be worth his while, to these Mr. Perry shall be welcome;

and all my reward shall be, his treating me with his paper—which, by the by, to anybody who has the least relish for wit, is a high treat indeed.

With the most grateful esteem,

I am ever, dear Sir,

R. B.

CCXXXII.

TO MR. HERON,

OF HERON.

DUMFRIES, *March*, 1795.

SIR,

I enclose you some copies of a couple of political ballads; one of which, I believe, you have never seen. Would to Heaven I could make you master of as many votes in the Stewartry! but—

“Who does the utmost that he can,
Does well, acts nobly; angels could no more.”

In order to bring my humble efforts to bear with more effect on the foe I have privately printed a good many copies of both ballads, and have sent them among friends all about the country.

To pillory on Parnassus the rank reprobation of character, the utter dereliction of all principle, in a profligate junto, which has not only outraged virtue, but violated common decency, spurning even hypocrisy as paltry iniquity below their daring;—to unmask their flagitiousness to the broadest day—to deliver such over to their merited fate—is surely not merely innocent, but laudable; is not only propriety, but virtue. You have already, as your auxiliary, the sober detestation of mankind on the heads of your opponents; and I swear by the lyre of Thalia to muster on your side all the votaries of honest laughter and fair, candid ridicule!

I am extremely obliged to you for your kind mention of my interests in a letter which Mr. Syme showed me. At present my situation in life must be in a great measure stationary, at least for two or three years.

The statement is this: I am on the supervisors' list, and as we come on there by precedence, in two or three years I shall be at the head of that list, and be appointed *of course*. Then a friend might be of service to me in getting me into a place of the kingdom which I would like. A supervisor's income varies from about a hundred and twenty to two hundred a year; but the business is an incessant drudgery, and would be nearly a complete bar to every species of literary pursuit. The moment I am appointed supervisor, in the common routine, I may be nominated on the collectors' list; and this is always a business purely of political patronage. A collectorship varies much, from better than two hundred a year to near a thousand. They also come forward by precedence on the list; and have, besides a handsome income, a life of complete leisure. A life of literary leisure, with a decent competency, is the summit of my wishes. It would be the prudish affectation of silly pride in me to say that I do not need, or would not be indebted to, a political friend: at the same time, Sir, I by no means lay my affairs before you thus, to hook my dependant situation on your benevolence. If, in my progress of life, an opening should occur where the good offices of a gentleman of your public character and political consequence might bring me forward, I shall petition your goodness with the same frankness as I now do myself the honour to subscribe myself,—R. B.

CCXXXIII.

TO MRS. RIDDELL.

DUMFRIES, 1795.

MR. BURNS's compliments to Mrs. Riddell; is much obliged to her for her polite attention in sending him the book. Owing to Mr. B.

being at present acting as supervisor of Excise, a department that occupies his every hour of the day, he has not that time to spare which is necessary for any *belle-lettre* pursuit; but, as he will, in a week or two, again return to his wonted leisure, he will then pay that attention to Mrs. R.'s beautiful song, "To thee, loved Nith," which it so well deserves. When "Anacharsis' Travels" come to hand, which Mrs. Riddell mentioned as her gift to the public library, Mr. B. will feel honoured by the indulgence of a perusal of them before presentation: it is a book he has never yet seen, and the regulations of the library allow too little leisure for deliberate reading.

Friday Evening.

P.S. Mr. Burns will be much obliged to Mrs. Riddell if she will favour him with a perusal of any of her poetical pieces which he may not have seen.

CCXXXIV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

DUMFRIES, 15th December, 1795(?)

MY DEAR FRIEND,

As I am in a complete Decemberish humour, gloomy, sullen, stupid, as even the Deity of Dulness herself could wish, I shall not draw out a heavy letter with a number of heavier apologies for my late silence. Only one I shall mention, because I know you will sympathize in it: these four months a sweet little girl, my youngest child, has been so ill, that every day a week or less threatened to terminate her existence. There had much need be many pleasures annexed to the states of husband and father, for, God knows, they have many peculiar cares. I cannot describe to you the anxious, sleepless hours these ties frequently give me. I see a train of helpless little folks; me and my exertions all their stay: and on what a brittle thread does the

life of man hang! If I am nipt off at the command of fate! even in all the vigour of manhood as I am—such things happen every day—gracious God! what would become of my little flock! 'Tis here that I envy your people of fortune. A father on his death-bed, taking an everlasting leave of his children, has indeed woe enough; but the man of competent fortune leaves his sons and daughters independency and friends, while I—but I shall run distracted if I think any longer on the subject!

To leave talking of the matter so gravely, I shall sing with the old Scots ballad—

"O that I had ne'er been married!
I would never had nae care;
Now I've gotten wife and bairns,
They cry crowdie! evermair.

Crowdie! ance; crowdie! twice;
Crowdie! three times in a day;
An ye, crowdie! ony mair,
Ye'll crowdie! a' my meal away."

December 24th.

WE have had a brilliant theatre here this season; only, as all other business does, it experiences a stagnation of trade from the epidemical complaint of the country, *want of cash*. I mentioned our theatre merely to lug in an occasional Address which I wrote for the benefit-night of one of the actresses, and which is as follows:—

[Here the Address is transcribed.]

25th, Christmas Morning.

THIS, my much-loved friend, is a morning of wishes; accept mine—so Heaven hear me as they are sincere!—that blessings may attend your steps, and affliction know you not! In the charming words of my favourite author, "The Man of Feeling," "May the Great Spirit bear up the weight of thy grey hairs, and blunt the arrow that brings them rest!"

Now that I talk of authors, how do you like Cowper? Is not the "Task" a glorious poem? The

religion of the "Task," bating a few scraps of Calvinistic divinity, is the religion of God and nature; the religion that exalts, that ennobles man. Were not you to send me your "Zeluco" in return for mine? Tell me how you like my marks and notes through the book. I would not give a farthing for a book, unless I were at liberty to blot it with my criticisms.

I have lately collected, for a friend's perusal, all my letters; I mean those which I first sketched, in a rough draught, and afterwards wrote out fair. On looking over some old musty papers, which, from time to time, I had parcelled by, as trash that were scarce worth preserving, and which yet at the same time I did not care to destroy, I discovered many of these rude sketches, and have written, and am writing them out, in a bound MS. for my friend's library. As I wrote always to you the rhapsody of the moment, I cannot find a single scroll to you except one, about the commencement of our acquaintance. If there were any possible conveyance, I would send you a perusal of my book.—R. B.

CCXXXV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP,
IN LONDON.

DUMFRIES, 20th December, 1795(?)

I HAVE been prodigiously disappointed in this London journey of yours. In the first place, when your last to me reached Dumfries, I was in the country, and did not return until too late to answer your letter; in the next place, I thought you would certainly take this route; and now I know not what is become of you, or whether this may reach you at all. God grant that it may find you and yours in prospering health and good spirits! Do let me hear from you the soonest possible.

As I hope to get a frank from my friend Captain Miller, I shall every leisure hour take up the pen, and gossip away whatever comes first, prose or poetry, sermon or song. In this last article I have abounded of late. I have often mentioned to you a superb publication of Scottish Songs, which is making its appearance in your great metropolis, and where I have the honour to preside over the Scottish verse, as no less a personage than Peter Pindar does over the English.

December 29th.

SINCE I began this letter, I have been appointed to act in the capacity of supervisor here; and I assure you, what with the load of business, and what with that business being new to me, I could scarcely have commanded ten minutes to have spoken to you, had you been in town, much less to have written you an epistle. This appointment is only temporary, and during the illness of the present incumbent; but I look forward to an early period when I shall be appointed in full form—a consummation devoutly to be wished! My political sins seem to be forgiven me.

Jan. 1.

THIS is the season (New-year's-day is now my date) of wishing; and mine are most fervently offered up for you. May life to you be a positive blessing while it lasts, for your own sake; and that it may yet be greatly prolonged is my wish, for my own sake, and for the sake of the rest of your friends! What a transient business is life! Very lately I was a boy; but t'other day I was a young man; and I already begin to feel the rigid fibre and stiffening joints of old age coming fast o'er my frame. With all my follies of youth, and I fear a few vices of manhood, still I congratulate myself on having had in early days religion strongly impressed on my

mind. I have nothing to say to anyone as to which sect he belongs to, or what creed he believes: but I look on the man who is firmly persuaded of infinite Wisdom and Goodness superintending and directing every circumstance that can happen in this lot—I felicitate such a man, as having a solid foundation for his mental enjoyment; a firm prop and sure stay in the hour of difficulty, trouble, and distress; and a never-failing anchor of hope, when he looks beyond the grave.

January 12th.

You will have seen our worthy and ingenious friend, the Doctor, long ere this. I hope he is well, and beg to be remembered to him. I have just been reading over again, I daresay, for the hundred and fiftieth time, his "View of Society and Manners;" and still I read it with delight. His humour is perfectly original: it is neither the humour of Addison, nor Swift, nor Sterne, nor of anybody but Dr. Moore. By the by, you have deprived me of "Zeluco;" remember that, when you are disposed to rake up the sins of my neglect from among the ashes of my laziness.

He has paid me a pretty compliment, by quoting me in his last publication.—R. B.

CCXXXVI.

TO THE
HON. THE PROVOST,
BAILIES, AND TOWN COUNCIL
OF DUMFRIES.

[1795.]

GENTLEMEN,

The literary taste and liberal spirit of your good town has so ably filled the various departments of your schools, as to make it a very great object for a parent to have his children educated in them. Still, to me, a stranger, with my large

family and very stinted income, to give my young ones that education I wish, at the high school fees which a stranger pays, will bear hard upon me.

Some years ago your good town did me the honour of making me an honorary Burgess. Will you allow me to request that this mark of distinction may extend so far as to put me on a footing of a real freeman of the town in the schools?

That I may not appear altogether unworthy of this favour allow me to state to you some little services I have lately done a branch of your revenue—the two pennies exigible on foreign ale vended within your limits. In this rather neglected article of your income, I am ready to show that within these few weeks my exertions have secured for you of those duties nearly the sum of Ten Pounds; and in this, too, I was the only one of the gentlemen of the Excise (except Mr. Mitchell, whom *you pay* for his trouble) who took the least concern in the business.

If you are so very kind as to grant my request, it will certainly be a constant incentive to me to strain every nerve where I can officially serve you, and will, if possible, increase that grateful respect with which I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your devoted humble Servant,
R. B.

CCXXXVII.

TO WILLIAM CREECH, ESQ.,
EDINBURGH.

DUMFRIES, 30th May, [1795.]

SIR,

I had intended to have troubled you with a long letter, but at present the delightful sensations of an omnipotent toothache so engross all my inner man, as to put it out of my power even to write nonsense. However, as in duty bound, I approach my bookseller with an

offering in my hand—a few poetical clinches and a song:—to expect any other kind of offering from the rhyming tribe would be to know them much less than you do. I do not pretend that there is much merit in these *morceaux*; but I have two reasons for sending them: *primo*, they are mostly ill-natured, so are in unison with my present feelings, while fifty troops of infernal spirits are driving post from ear to ear along my jaw-bones; and *secondly*, they are so short, that you cannot leave off in the middle, and so hurt my pride in the idea that you found any work of mine too heavy to get through.

I have a request to beg of you, and I not only beg of you, but conjure you, by all your wishes and by all your hopes that the Muse will spare the satiric wink in the moment of your foibles; that she will warble the song of rapture round your hymeneal couch; and that she will shed on your turf the honest tear of elegiac gratitude! Grant my request as speedily as possible: send me by the very first fly or coach for this place three copies of the last edition of my poems, which place to my account.

Now may the good things of prose, and the good things of verse come among thy hands, until they be filled with the *good things of this life*, prayeth
R. B.

CCXXXVIII.

TO MRS. RIDDELL.

DUMFRIES, 29th January, 1796.

I CANNOT express my gratitude to you for allowing me a longer perusal of "Anacharsis." In fact, I never met with a book that bewitched me so much; and I, as a member of the library, must warmly feel the obligation you have laid us under. Indeed, to me the obligation is stronger than to any other individual of our society; as "Anacharsis" is an indispensable desideratum to a son of the Muses.

The health you wished me in your morning's card is, I think, flown from me for ever. I have not been able to leave my bed to-day till about an hour ago. These wickedly unlucky advertisements I lent (I did wrong) to a friend, and I am ill able to go in quest of him.
R. B.

CCXXXIX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

DUMFRIES, 31st January, 1796.

THESE many months you have been two packets in my debt: what sin of ignorance I have committed against so highly valued a friend I am utterly at a loss to guess. Alas, Madam! ill can I afford, at this time, to be deprived of any of the small remnant of my pleasures. I have lately drunk deep of the cup of affliction. The autumn robbed me of my only daughter and darling child, and that at a distance too, and so rapidly, as to put it out of my power to pay the last duties to her. I had scarcely begun to recover from that shock, when I became myself the victim of a most severe rheumatic fever, and long the die spun doubtful; until, after many weeks of a sick bed, it seems to have turned up life, and I am beginning to crawl across my room, and once indeed have been before my own door in the street.

"When pleasure fascinates the mental sight,
Affliction purifies the visual ray,
Religion hails the drear, the untried night,
And shuts, for ever shuts, life's doubtful day."
R. B.

CCXL.

TO MRS. RIDDELL.

DUMFRIES, 4th June, 1796.

I AM in such miserable health as to be utterly incapable of showing my loyalty in any way. Racked as I am with rheumatisms, I meet every face with a greeting like that of Balak to Balaam: "Come, curse me Jacob; and come, defy me Israel!" So say I: "Come, curse me that east wind;

and come, defy me the north! Would you have me in such circumstances copy you out a love-song?

I may perhaps see you on Saturday, but I will not be at the ball. Why should I? "Man delights not me, nor woman either!" Can you supply me with the song, "Let us all be unhappy together?"—do if you can, and oblige *le pauvre misérable*.—R. B.

CCXLI.

TO MR. JAMES JOHNSON,
EDINBURGH.

[About May 17, 1796.]

How are you, my dear friend, and how comes on your fifth volume? You may probably think that for some time past I have neglected you and your work; but, alas! the hand of pain, and sorrow, and care, has these many months lain heavy on me! Personal and domestic affliction have almost entirely banished that alacrity and life with which I used to woo the rural Muse of Scotia. In the meantime let us finish what we have so well begun. The gentleman, Mr. Lewars, a particular friend of mine, will bring out any proofs (if they are ready) or any message you may have. Farewell!—R. B.

[Turn over.

[June 16.]

You should have had this when Mr. Lewars called on you, but his saddle-bags miscarried. I am extremely anxious for your work, as, indeed, I am for everything concerning you and your welfare. You are a good, worthy, honest fellow, and have a good right to live in this world—because you deserve it. Many a merry meeting this publication has given us, and possibly it may give us more, though, alas! I fear it. This protracting, slow, consuming illness which hangs over me will, I doubt much, my ever dear

friend, arrest my sun before he has well reached his middle career, and will turn over the poet to far more important concerns than studying the brilliancy of wit or the pathos of sentiment! However, *hope* is the cordial of the human heart, and I endeavour to cherish it as well as I can.

Let me hear from you as soon as convenient. Your work is a great one; and now that it is near finished, I see, if we were to begin again, two or three things that might be mended; yet I will venture to prophesy, that to future ages your publication will be the text-book and standard of Scottish song and music.

I am ashamed to ask another favour of you, because you have been so very good already; but my wife has a very particular friend of hers, a young lady who sings well, to whom she wishes to present the "Scots Musical Museum." If you have a spare copy, will you be so obliging as to send it by the very first *fly*, as I am anxious to have it soon.

Yours ever,

R. B.

[In this humble and delicate manner did poor Burns ask for a copy of a work of which he was principally the founder, and to which he had contributed, gratuitously, not less than 184 original, altered, and collected songs! The Editor has seen 180 transcribed by his own hand for the "Museum." This letter was written on the 4th of July—the poet died on the 21st.—CROMEK.]

CCXLII.

TO MR. ALEX. CUNNINGHAM.

BROW, SEA-BATHING QUARTERS,
7th July, 1796.

MY DEAR CUNNINGHAM,

I received yours here this moment, and am indeed highly flattered with the approbation of the literary circle you mention—a

literary circle inferior to none in the two kingdoms. Alas! my friend, I fear the voice of the bard will soon be heard among you no more! For these eight or ten months I have been ailing, sometimes bed-fast and sometimes not; but these last three months I have been tortured with an excruciating rheumatism, which has reduced me to nearly the last stage. You actually would not know me if you saw me. Pale, emaciated, and so feeble as occasionally to need help from my chair—my spirits fled! fled!—but I can no more on the subject—only the medical folks tell me that my last and only chance is bathing, and country quarters, and riding. The deuce of the matter is this: when an exciseman is off duty, his salary is reduced to £35 instead of £50. What way, in the name of thrift, shall I maintain myself, and keep a horse in country quarters, with a wife and five children at home, on £35? I mention this because I had intended to beg your utmost interest, and that of all the friends you can muster, to move our Commissioners of Excise to grant me the full salary; I daresay you know them all personally. If they do not grant it me, I must lay my account with an exit truly *en poete*—if I die not of disease, I must perish with hunger.

I have sent you one of the songs; the other my memory does not serve me with, and I have no copy here; but I shall be at home soon, when I will send it you. *Apropos* to being at home, Mrs. Burns threatens in a week or two to add one more to my paternal charge, which, if of the right gender, I intend shall be introduced to the world by the respectable designation of *Alexander Cunningham Burns*. My last was *James Glencairn*, so you can have no objection to the company of nobility. Farewell.—R. B.

CCXLIII.

TO MR. GILBERT BURNS.

BROW, 10th July, 1796.

DEAR BROTHER,

It will be no very pleasing news to you to be told that I am dangerously ill, and not likely to get better. An inveterate rheumatism has reduced me to such a state of debility, and my appetite is so totally gone, that I can scarcely stand on my legs. I have been a week at sea-bathing, and I will continue there, or in a friend's house in the country, all the summer. God keep my wife and children! if I am taken from their head, they will be poor indeed. I have contracted one or two serious debts, partly from my illness these many months, partly from too much thoughtlessness as to expense when I came to town, that will cut in too much on the little I leave them in your hands. Remember me to my mother.

Yours,

R. B.

CCXLIV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

BROW, 12th July, 1796.

MADAM,

I have written you so often, without receiving any answer, that I would not trouble you again, but for the circumstances in which I am. An illness which has long hung about me in all probability will speedily send me beyond that *bourne whence no traveller returns*. Your friendship, with which for many years you honoured me, was a friendship dearest to my soul. Your conversation, and especially your correspondence, were at once highly entertaining and instructive. With what pleasure did I use to break up the seal! The remembrance yet adds one pulse more to my poor palpitating heart. Farewell!!—R. B.

CCXLV.

TO MR. JAMES BURNES,
WRITER, MONTROSE.

12th July, 1796.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

When you offered me money assistance, little did I think I should want it so soon. A rascal of a haberdasher, to whom I owe a considerable bill, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process against me, and will infallibly put my emaciated body into jail. Will you be so good as to accommodate me, and that by return of post, with ten pounds? O, James! did you know the pride of my heart, you would feel doubly for me. Alas! I am not used to beg. The worst of it is, my health was coming about finely; you know, and my physician assured me, that melancholy and low spirits are half my disease; guess, then, my horrors since this business began. If I had it settled, I would be, I think, quite well in a manner. How shall I use the language to you, O do not disappoint me! but strong necessity's curst command.

I have been thinking over and over my brother's affairs, and I fear I must cut him up; but on this I will correspond at another time, particularly as I shall [require] your advice.

Forgive me for once more mentioning by return of post;—save me from the horrors of a jail!

My compliments to my friend James, and to all the rest. I do not know what I have written. The subject is so horrible, I dare not look it over again. Farewell.—R. B.

CCXLVI.

TO JAMES GRACIE, ESQ.,
BANKER, DUMFRIES.

BROW, 13th July, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR,

It would [be] doing high injustice to this place not to

acknowledge that my rheumatisms have derived great benefits from it already; but, alas! my loss of appetite still continues. I shall not need your kind offer *this week*, and I return to town the beginning of next week, it not being a tide week. I am detaining a man in a burning hurry; so, God bless you!

R. B.

CCXLVII.

TO MRS. BURNS.

BROW, 14th July, 1796.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I delayed writing until I could tell you what effect sea-bathing was likely to produce. It would be injustice to deny that it has eased my pains, and I think has strengthened me; but my appetite is still extremely bad. No flesh nor fish can I swallow: porridge and milk are the only things I can taste. I am very happy to hear, by Miss Jessie Lewars, that you are all well. My very best and kindest compliments to her, and to all the children. I will see you on Sunday.

Your affectionate Husband,

R. B.

CCXLVIII.

TO MR. JAMES ARMOUR,
MAUCHLINE.

DUMFRIES, 18th July, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR,

Do, for Heaven's sake, send Mrs. Armour here immediately. My wife is hourly expecting to be put to bed. Good God! what a situation for her to be in, poor girl, without a friend! I returned from sea-bathing quarters to-day, and my medical friends would almost persuade me that I am better; but I think and feel that my strength is so gone that the disorder will prove fatal to me.

Your Son-in-law,

R. B.

LETTERS TO CLARINDA.

I.

[The Clarinda of the following extraordinary correspondence, who resided in General's Ln'g., Portrow, Edinburgh, was younger than the poet only by three months. Her maiden name was Agnes Craig; her father being Mr. Andrew Craig, a surgeon of highly-respectable connection in Glasgow. In July, 1776, when she was only seventeen years old, she married Mr. James M'Lehose, a law agent in Glasgow, who, though also well-connected, appears to have been in no way worthy of her. The result was a separation within five years after the marriage, when she returned to her father's house, while he, in 1784, sailed for the West Indies, there to push his fortune. After the death of her father in 1782, Mrs. M'Lehose removed to Edinburgh, with her two boys, her only certain source of income being a small annuity, arising from a judicious investment which her father had made in her behalf. Burns and she first met at a tea-party in the house of Miss Nimmo, an elderly lady and mutual friend, in December, 1787. In addition to being beautiful in person and fascinating in manner, Mrs. M. was something of a poetess, and more than ordinarily intelligent; and that she made a powerful impression on the ever susceptible poet is a fact beyond question. But as to the rights or wisdom of the amour, in the face of his engagement to Jean Armour—as to its lasting genuine quality on his part; as to the lady's right to encourage, or even countenance the attachment, in view of her married condition—these are problems before which reason bows in baffled submission. It may be claimed that Robert Burns is not to be measured by the tape-line with which you take the height and girth of ordinary men. But, if that is granted, how about the lady? In his later letters particularly here there is more than a

mere suspicion of magnificent trifling. But the genuineness of Clarinda's passion, however imprudent, is ever above suspicion. From first to last she loved Sylvander with love that knows not death. She acutely felt the poet's ultimate forgetfulness of her, but never ceased to hold his memory in affectionate remembrance: and in her private journal, written forty years after the date of their last interview, the entry appears:—"6th Dec., 1831.—This day I never can forget. Parted with Robert Burns in the year 1791, never more to meet in this world. Oh, may we meet in heaven!" Dr. Chambers tells that he "heard Clarinda, at seventy-five, express the same hope to meet in another sphere the one heart that she had ever found herself able entirely to sympathise with, but which had been divided from her on earth by such pitiless obstacles." She died in 1841, in her eighty-second year.]

THURSDAY EVENING
[December 6, 1787].

MADAM,

I had set no small store by my tea-drinking to-night, and have not often been so disappointed. Saturday evening I shall embrace the opportunity with the greatest pleasure. I leave town this day se'ennight, and probably for a couple of twelve-months; but must ever regret that I so lately got an acquaintance I shall ever highly esteem, and in whose welfare I shall ever be warmly interested.

Our worthy common friend, in her usual pleasant way, rallied me a good deal on my new acquaintance, and in the humour of her ideas I wrote some lines, which I enclose you, as I think they have a good deal of poetic merit; and Miss Nimmo tells me you are not only a critic, but a

poetess. Fiction, you know, is the native region of poetry; and I hope you will pardon my vanity in sending you the bagatelle as a tolerable off-hand *jeu d'esprit*. I have several poetic trifles, which I shall gladly leave with Miss Nimmo or you, if they were worth house-room; as there are scarcely two people on earth by whom it would mortify me more to be forgotten, though at the distance of ninescore miles.

I am, Madam, with the highest respect,

Your very humble Servant,
ROBT. BURNS.

II.

ST. JAMES' SQUARE,
Saturday Even [Dec. 8, 1787.]

I CAN say, with truth, Madam, that I never met with a person in my life whom I more anxiously wished to meet again than yourself. To-night I was to have had that very great pleasure—I was intoxicated with the idea; but an unlucky fall from a coach has so bruised one of my knees, that I can't stir my leg off the cushion. So, if I don't see you again, I shall not rest in my grave for chagrin. I was vexed to the soul I had not seen you sooner. I determined to cultivate your friendship with the enthusiasm of religion; but thus has Fortune ever served me. I cannot bear the idea of leaving Edinburgh without seeing you. I know not how to account for it—I am strangely taken with some people, nor am I often mistaken. You are a stranger to me; but I am an odd being. Some yet unnamed feelings—things, not principles, but better than whims—carry me farther than boasted reason ever did a philosopher.

Farewell! every happiness be yours.

ROBT. BURNS.

III.

[Mrs. M'Lehose, in condoling with him on his accident, had written, "Were I your sister, I would call and see you," and enclosed some verses she had composed.]

[Dec. 12, 1787.]

I STRETCH a point, indeed, my dearest Madam, when I answer your card on the rack of my present agony. Your friendship, Madam! By heavens, I was never proud before! Your lines, I maintain it, are poetry, and good poetry; mine were indeed partly fiction, and partly a friendship which, had I been so blest as to have met with you *in time*, might have led me—God of love only knows where. Time is too short for ceremonies.

I swear solemnly (in all the tenor of my former oath) to remember you in all the pride and warmth of friendship until—I cease to be!

To-morrow, and every day, till I see you, you shall hear from me.

Farewell! May you enjoy a better night's repose than I am likely to have.

R. B.

IV.

[Dec. 20, 1787.]

YOUR last, my dear Madam, had the effect on me that Job's situation had on his friends, when "they sat down seven days and seven nights astonished, and spake not a word." "Pay my addresses to a married woman!" I started as if I had seen the ghost of him I had injured: I recollected my expressions; some of them indeed were, in the law phrase, "habit and repute," which is being half guilty. I cannot positively say, Madam, whether my heart might not have gone astray a little; but I can declare, upon the honour of a poet, that the vagrant has wandered unknown to me. I have a pretty handsome troop of follies of my own;

and, like some other people's retinue, they are but undisciplined blackguards: but the luckless rascals have something of honour in them: they would not do a dishonest thing.

To meet with an unfortunate woman, amiable and young, deserted and widowed by those who were bound by every tie of duty, nature, and gratitude to protect, comfort, and cherish her; add to all, when she is perhaps one of the first of lovely forms and noble minds, the mind, too, that hits one's taste as the joys of heaven do a saint—should a vague infant idea, the natural child of imagination, thoughtlessly peep over the fence—were you, my friend, to sit in judgment, and the poor, airy straggler brought before you, trembling, self-condemned, with artless eyes, brimful of contrition, looking wistfully on its judge, you could not, my dear Madam, condemn the hapless wretch to death “without benefit of clergy?”

I won't tell you what reply my heart made to your raillery of “seven years:” but I will give you what a brother of my trade says on the same allusion:—

“The Patriarch to gain a wife,
Chaste, beautiful, and young,
Served fourteen years a painful life,
And never thought it long.

‘Oh, were you to reward such cares,
And life so long would stay,
Not fourteen but four hundred years
Would seem as but one day.’”

I have written you this scrawl because I have nothing else to do, and you may sit down and find fault with it, if you have no better way of consuming your time; but finding fault with the vagaries of a poet's fancy is much such another business as Xerxes chastising the waves of the Hellespont.

My limb now allows me to sit in some peace: to walk I have yet no prospect of, as I can't mark it to the ground.

I have just now looked over what I have written, and it is such a chaos of nonsense that I daresay you will throw it into the fire, and call me an idle, stupid fellow; but whatever you think of my brains, believe me to be, with the most sacred respect and heartfelt esteem,

My dear Madam,

Your humble Servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

V.

[In the rest of the letters between Mrs. M'Lehose and Burns (until near the end) she signs herself "Clarinda," and he "Sylvander."]

[December 28, 1787.]

I BEG your pardon, my dear “Clarinda,” for the fragment scrawl I sent you yesterday. I really do not know what I wrote. A gentleman for whose character, abilities, and critical knowledge I have the highest veneration, called in just as I had begun the second sentence, and I would not make the porter wait. I read to my much-respected friend several of my own bagatelles, and, among others, your lines, which I had copied out. He began some criticism on them as on the other pieces, when I informed him they were the work of a young lady in this town, which, I assure you, made him stare. My learned friend seriously protested that he did not believe any young woman in Edinburgh was capable of such lines; and if you know anything of Professor Gregory, you will neither doubt of his abilities nor his sincerity. I do love you, if possible, still better for having so fine a taste and turn for poesy. I have again gone wrong in my usual unguarded way, but you may erase the word, and put esteem, respect, or any other tame Dutch expression you please in its place. I believe

there is no holding converse, or carrying on correspondence, with an amiable woman, much less a *gloriously amiable fine woman*, without some mixture of that delicious passion whose most devoted slave I have more than once had the honour of being. But why be hurt or offended on that account? Can no honest man have a prepossession for a fine woman, but he must run his head against an intrigue? Take a little of the tender witchcraft of love, and add to it the generous, the honourable, sentiments of manly friendship, and I know but *one* more delightful morsel, which few, few in any rank ever taste. Such a composition is like adding cream to strawberries: it not only gives the fruit a more elegant richness, but has a peculiar deliciousness of its own.

I enclose you a few lines I composed on a late melancholy occasion. I will not give above five or six copies of it at all, and I would be hurt if any friend should give any copies without my consent.

You cannot imagine, Clarinda (I like the idea of Arcadian names in a commerce of this kind), how much store I have set by the hopes of your future friendship. I do not know if you have a just idea of my character, but I wish you to see me as I am. I am, as most people of my trade are, a strange Will-o'-wisp being; the victim, too frequently, of much imprudence and many follies. My great constituent elements are *pride* and *passion*. The first I have endeavoured to humanise into integrity and honour; the last makes me a devotee to the warmest degree of enthusiasm in love, religion, or friendship—either of them, or all together, as I happen to be inspired. 'Tis true I never saw you but once; but how much acquaintance did I form with you in that once! Do not think I flatter you, or have a

design upon you, Clarinda: I have too much pride for the one, and too little cold contrivance for the other; but of all God's creatures I ever could approach in the beaten way of my acquaintance, you struck me with the deepest, the strongest, the most permanent impression. I say the most permanent, because I know myself well, and how far I can promise either in my prepossessions or powers. Why are you unhappy? And why are so many of our fellow-creatures, unworthy to belong to the same species with you, blest with all they can wish? You have a hand all benevolent to give: why were you denied the pleasure? You have a heart formed—gloriously formed—for all the most refined luxuries of love: why was that heart ever wrung? Oh Clarinda! shall we not meet in a state, some yet unknown state of being, where the lavish hand of plenty shall minister to the highest wish of benevolence, and where the chill north wind of prudence shall never blow over the flowery fields of enjoyment? If we do not, man was made in vain! I deserve most of the unhappy hours that have lingered over my head; they were the wages of my labour: but what unprovoked demon, malignant as hell, stole upon the confidence of unmistrusting busy fate, and dashed *your* cup of life with undeserved sorrow?

Let me know how long your stay will be out of town; I shall count the hours till you inform me of your return. Cursed *etiquette* forbids your seeing me just now; and so soon as I can walk I must bid Edinburgh adieu. Lord! why was I born to see misery which I cannot relieve, and to meet with friends whom I cannot enjoy? I look back with the pang of unavailing avarice on my loss in not knowing you sooner: all last winter, these three months past, what luxury of intercourse

have I not lost! Perhaps, though, 'twas better for my peace. You see I am either above or incapable of dissimulation. I believe it is want of that particular genius. I despise design, because I want either coolness or wisdom to be capable of it. I am interrupted. Adieu, my dear Clarinda!

SYLVANDER.

VI.

[Jan. 3, 1788.]

MY DEAR CLARINDA,

Your last verses have so delighted me, that I have copied them in among some of my own most valued pieces, which I keep sacred for my own use. Do let me have a few now and then.

Did you, Madam, know what I feel when you talk of your sorrows!

Good God! that one who has so much worth in the sight of heaven, and is so amiable to her fellow-creatures, should be so unhappy! I can't venture out for cold. My limb is vastly better; but I have not any use of it without my crutches. Monday, for the first time, I dine at a neighbour's, next door. As soon as I can go so far, *even in a coach*, my first visit shall be to you. Write me when you leave town, and immediately when you return; and I earnestly pray your stay may be short. You can't imagine how miserable you made me when you hinted to me not to write. Farewell.

SYLVANDER.

VII.

[Jan. 3, 1788.]

You are right, my dear Clarinda: a friendly correspondence goes for nothing, except one write their undisguised sentiments. Yours please me for their intrinsic merit, as well as because they are *yours*, which, I

assure you, is to me a high recommendation. Your religious sentiments, Madam, I revere. If you have, on some suspicious evidence, from some lying oracle, learned that I despise or ridicule so sacredly important a matter as real religion, you have, my Clarinda, much misconstrued your friend;—"I am not mad, most noble Festus!" Have you ever met a perfect character? Do we not sometimes rather exchange faults than get rid of them? For instance, I am perhaps tired with and shocked at a life too much the prey of giddy inconsistencies and thoughtless follies; by degrees I grow sober, prudent, and stately pious—I say stately, because the most unaffected devotion is not at all inconsistent with my first character—I join the world in congratulating myself on the happy change. But let me pry more narrowly into this affair. Have I, at bottom, anything of a secret pride in these endowments and emendations? Have I nothing of a Presbyterian sourness, a hypocritical severity, when I survey my less regular neighbours? In a word, have I missed all those nameless and numberless modifications of indistinct selfishness, which are so near our own eyes, we can scarcely bring them within the sphere of our vision, and which the known spotless cambric of our character hides from the ordinary observer?

My definition of worth is short: truth and humanity respecting our fellow-creatures; reverence and humility in the presence of that Being, my Creator and Preserver, and who, I have every reason to believe, will one day be my Judge. The first part of my definition is the creature of unbiassed instinct; the last is the child of after reflection. Where I found these two essentials, I would gently note, and slightly mention, any attendant flaws—flaws,

the marks, the consequences of human nature.

I can easily enter into the sublime pleasures that your strong imagination and keen sensibility must derive from religion, particularly if a little in the shade of misfortune; but I own I cannot, without a marked grudge, see Heaven totally engross so amiable, so charming a woman, as my friend Clarinda; and should be very well pleased at a *circumstance* that would put it in the power of somebody (happy somebody!) to divide her attention, with all the delicacy and tenderness of an earthly attachment.

You will not easily persuade me that you have not a grammatical knowledge of the English language. So far from being inaccurate, you are elegant beyond any woman of my acquaintance, except one, whom I wish you knew.

Your last verses to me have so delighted me, that I have got an excellent old Scots air that suits the measure, and you shall see them in print in the *Scots Musical Museum*, a work publishing by a friend of mine in this town. I want four stanzas; you gave me but three, and one of them alluded to an expression in my former letter; so I have taken your two first verses, with a slight alteration in the second, and have added a third; but you must help me to a fourth. Here they are: the latter half of the first stanza would have been worthy of Sappho; I am in raptures with it.

“Talk not of Love, it gives me pain,
For Love has been my foe:
He bound me with an iron chain,
And sunk me deep in woe.”

“But Friendship’s pure and lasting joys
My heart was form’d to prove:
There, welcome, win and wear the prize,
But never talk of love.”

Your friendship much can make me blest,
O why that bliss destroy?
Why urge the odious [only] one request,
You know I must [will] deny?

The alteration in the second stanza is no improvement, but there was a slight inaccuracy in your rhyme. The third I only offer to your choice, and have left two words for your determination. The air is “The Banks of Spey,” and is most beautiful.

To-morrow evening I intend taking a chair, and paying a visit at Park Place to a much-valued old friend. If I could be sure of finding you at home (and I will send one of the chairmen to call), I would spend from five to six o’clock with you, as I go past. I cannot do more at this time, as I have something on my hand that hurries me much. I propose giving you the first call, my old friend the second, and Miss Nimmo, as I return home. Do not break any engagement for me, as I will spend another evening with you at any rate before I leave town.

Do not tell me that you are pleased when your friends inform you of your faults. I am ignorant what they are; but I am sure they must be such evanescent trifles, compared with your personal and mental accomplishments, that I would despise the ungenerous narrow soul who would notice any shadow of imperfections you may seem to have any other way than in the most delicate agreeable raillery. Coarse minds are not aware how much they injure the keenly-feeling tie of bosom-friendship, when, in their foolish officiousness, they mention what nobody cares for recollecting. People of nice sensibility and generous minds have a certain intrinsic dignity, that fires at being trifled with, or lowered, or even too nearly approached.

You need make no apology for long letters: I am even with you. Many happy new-years to you, charming Clarinda! I can’t dissemble, were it to shun perdition. He who sees you as I have done,



CLARINDA.
(MRS. MCLEHOSÉ)



GEORGE THOMSON.



ELIZABETH BURNET.



MARGARET CHALMERS.
(MRS. LEWIS HAY)



and does not love you, deserves to be damned for his stupidity! He who loves you, and would injure you, deserves to be doubly damned for his villany! Adieu.

SYLVANDER.

P.S.—What would you think of this for a fourth stanza?

Your thought, if love must harbour there,
Conceal it in that thought,
Nor cause me from my bosom tear
The very friend I sought.

VIII.

[Jan. 5, 1788.]

SOME days, some nights, nay, some *hours*, like the “ten righteous persons in Sodom,” save the rest of the vapid, tiresome, miserable months and years of life. One of these hours my dear Clarinda blest me with yesternight.

“One well-spent hour,
In such a tender circumstance for friends,
Is better than an age of common time!”
—THOMSON.

My favourite feature in Milton’s Satan is his manly fortitude in supporting what cannot be remedied—in short, the wild broken fragments of a noble exalted mind in ruins. I meant no more by saying he was a favourite hero of mine.

I mentioned to you my letter to Dr. Moore, giving an account of my life: it is truth, every word of it, and will give you a just idea of the man whom you have honoured with your friendship. I am afraid you will hardly be able to make sense of so torn a piece. Your verses I shall muse on, deliciously, as I gaze on your image in my mind’s eye, in my heart’s core: they will be in time enough for a week to come. I am truly happy your headache is better. Oh, how can pain or evil be so daringly unfeeling, cruelly savage as to wound so noble a mind, so lovely a form!

My little fellow is all my namesake. Write me soon. My every, strongest good wishes attend you, Clarinda!

SYLVANDER.

I know not what I have written, I am pestered with people around me.

IX.

[Jan. 8, 1788.]

I AM delighted, charming Clarinda, with your honest enthusiasm for religion. Those of either sex, but particularly the female, who are lukewarm in that most important of all things, “O my soul, come not thou into their secrets!” I feel myself deeply interested in your good opinion, and will lay before you the outlines of my belief. He who is our Author and Preserver, and will one day be our Judge, must be (not for His sake in the way of duty, but from the native impulse of our hearts) the object of our reverential awe and grateful adoration: He is almighty and all-bounteous, we are weak and dependent; hence prayer and every other sort of devotion.—“He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to everlasting life;” consequently it must be in every one’s power to embrace His offer of “everlasting life;” otherwise He could not, in justice, condemn those who did not. A mind pervaded, actuated, and governed by purity, truth, and charity, though it does not *merit* heaven, yet is an absolutely necessary prerequisite, without which heaven can neither be obtained nor enjoyed; and, by Divine promise, such a mind shall never fail of attaining “everlasting life:” hence the impure, the deceiving, and the uncharitable extrude themselves from eternal bliss, by their unfitness for enjoying it. The

Supreme Being has put the immediate administration of all this, for wise and good ends known to Himself, into the hands of Jesus Christ—a great personage, whose relation to Him we cannot comprehend, but whose relation to us is that of a guide and Saviour; and who, except for our own obstinacy and misconduct, will bring us all, through various ways, and by various means, to bliss at last.

These are my tenets, my lovely friend; and which, I think, cannot be well disputed. My creed is pretty nearly expressed in the last clause of Jamie Deans's grace, an honest weaver in Ayrshire: "Lord, grant that we may lead a gude life! for a gude life makes a gude end; at least it helps weel."

I am flattered by the entertainment you tell me you have found in my packet. You see me as I have been, you know me as I am, and may guess at what I am likely to be. I too may say, "Talk not of love," &c. for indeed he has "plunged me deep in woe!" Not that I ever saw a woman who pleased unexceptionably, as my Clarinda elegantly says, "in the companion, the friend, and the mistress." *One* indeed I could except—*one*, before passion threw its mists over my discernment, I knew *the* first of women! Her name is indelibly written in my heart's core—but I dare not look in on it—a degree of agony would be the consequence. Oh, thou perfidious, cruel, mischief-making demon, who presidest over that frantic passion—thou mayst, thou dost poison my peace, but thou shalt not taint my honour—I would not, for a single moment, give an asylum to the most distant imagination, that would shadow the faintest outline of a selfish gratification, at the expense of her whose happiness is twisted with the threads of my

existence.—May she be as happy as she deserves! And if my tenderest, faithfulest friendship can add to her bliss, I shall at least have one solid mine of enjoyment in my bosom. *Don't guess at these ravings!*

I watched at our front window to-day, but was disappointed. It has been a day of disappointments. I am just risen from a two hours' bout after supper, with silly or sordid souls, who could relish nothing in common with me, but the port.—*One*—'Tis now "witching time of night;" and whatever is out of joint in the foregoing scrawl, impute it to enchantments and spells; for I can't look over it, but will seal it up directly, as I don't care for to-morrow's criticisms on it.

You are by this time fast asleep, Clarinda; may good angels attend and guard you as constantly and faithfully as my good wishes do!

"Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces."

John Milton, I wish thy soul better rest than I expect on my pillow to-night. Oh for a little of the cart-horse part of human nature! Good-night, my dearest Clarinda!

SYLVANDER.

X.

[Jan. 10, 1788.]

I AM certain I saw you, Clarinda; but you don't look to the proper storey for a poet's lodging,

"Where speculation roosted near the sky."

I could almost have thrown myself over for very vexation. Why didn't you look higher? It has spoilt my peace for this day. To be so near my charming Clarinda; to miss her look while it was searching for me! I am sure the soul is capable of disease, for mine has convulsed itself into an inflammatory fever. I am sorry for your little boy: do let me know to-morrow how he is.

You have converted me, Clarinda (I shall love that name while I live: there is heavenly music in it!). Booth and Amelia I know well. Your sentiments on that subject, as they are on every subject, are just and noble. "To be feelingly alive to kindness and to unkindness" is a charming female character.

What I said in my last letter, the powers of fuddling sociality only know for me. By yours, I understand my good star has been partly in my horizon when I got wild in my reveries. Had that evil planet, which has almost all my life shed its baleful rays on my devoted head, been as usual in its zenith, I had certainly blabbed something that would have pointed out to you the dear object of my tenderest friendship, and, in spite of me, something more. Had that fatal information escaped me, and it was merely chance or kind stars that it did not, I had been undone. You would never have written me, except, perhaps, *once* more. Oh, I could curse circumstances! and the coarse tie of human laws which keeps fast what common sense would loose, and which bars that happiness itself cannot give—happiness which otherwise love and honour would warrant! But hold—I shall make no more "hairbreadth 'scapes."

My friendship, Clarinda, is a life-
rent business. My likings are both strong and eternal. I told you I had but one male friend: I have but two female. I should have a third, but she is surrounded by the blandishments of flattery and courtship. Her I register in my heart's core by Peggy Chalmers: Miss Nimmo can tell you how divine she is. She is worthy of a place in the same bosom with my Clarinda. That is the highest compliment I can pay her. Farewell, Clarinda! Remember

SYLVANDER.

XI.

Saturday Morning [Jan. 12, 1788.]

YOUR thoughts on religion, Clarinda, shall be welcome. You may perhaps distrust me when I say 'tis also my favourite topic; but mine is the religion of the bosom. I hate the very idea of a controversial divinity; as I firmly believe, that every honest, upright man, of whatever sect, will be accepted of the Deity. If your verses, as you seem to hint, contain censure, except you want an occasion to break with me, don't send them. I have a little infirmity in my disposition, that where I fondly love, or highly esteem, I cannot bear reproach.

"Reverence thyself" is a sacred maxim, and I wish to cherish it. I think I told you Lord Bolingbroke's saying to Swift—"Adieu, dear Swift, with all thy faults I love thee entirely; make an effort to love me with all mine." A glorious sentiment, and without which there can be no friendship. I do highly, very highly esteem you indeed, Clarinda—you merit it all. Perhaps, too, I scorn dissimulation. I could fondly love you: judge, then, what a maddening sting your reproach would be. "Oh, I have sins to Heaven, but none to you!" With what pleasure would I meet you to-day, but I cannot walk to meet the Fly. I hope to be able to see you on *foot*, about the middle of next week.

I am interrupted—perhaps you are not sorry for it, you will tell me—but I won't anticipate blame. Oh Clarinda! did you know how dear to me is your look of kindness, your smile of approbation, you would not, either in prose or verse, risk a censorious remark.

"'Curst be the verse, how well so'er it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my
foe!"

SYLVANDER.

XII.

[Jan. 12, 1788.]

You talk of weeping, Clarinda! Some involuntary drops wet your lines as I read them. *Offend* me, my dearest angel! You cannot offend me—you never offended me. If you had ever given me the least shadow of offence, so pardon me, my God, as I forgive Clarinda. I have read yours again; it has blotted my paper. Though I find your letter has agitated me into a violent headache, I shall take a chair and be with you about eight. A friend is to be with us at tea, on my account, which hinders me from coming sooner. Forgive, my dearest Clarinda, my unguarded expressions. For Heaven's sake, forgive me, or I shall never be able to bear my own mind.

Your unhappy
SYLVANDER.

XIII.

Monday Even, 11 o'clock.
[Jan. 14, 1788.]

WHY have I not heard from you, Clarinda? To-day I expected it; and before supper, when a letter to me was announced, my heart danced with rapture: but behold, 'twas some fool, who had taken it into his head to turn poet, and made me an offering of the first fruits of his nonsense. "It is not poetry, but prose run mad." Did I ever repeat to you an epigram I made on a Mr. Elphinstone, who has given a translation of Martial, a famous Latin poet? The poetry of Elphinstone can only equal his prose-notes. I was sitting in a merchant's shop of my acquaintance, waiting somebody; he put Elphinstone into my hand, and asked my opinion of it; I begged leave to write it on a blank leaf, which I did—

TO MR. ELPHINSTONE, ETC.

Oh thou, whom poesy abhors!
Whom prose has turned out of doors!
Heard'st thou yon groan?—proceed no further!
'Twas laurell'd Martial calling murder!

I am determined to see you, if at all possible, on Saturday evening. Next week I must sing—

The night is my departing night,
The morn's the day I maun awa';
There's neither friend nor foe o' mine
But wishes that I were awa'!

What I hae done for lack o' wit,
I never, never can reca';
I hope ye're a' my friends as yet—
Gude night, and joy be wi' you a'!

If I could see you sooner, I would be so much the happier; but I would not purchase the dearest gratification on earth, if it must be at your expense in worldly censure, far less inward peace.

I shall certainly be ashamed of thus scrawling whole sheets of incoherence. The only *unity* (a sad word with poets and critics!) in my ideas is CLARINDA. There my heart "reigns and revels!"

"What art thou, Love? whence are those charms,

That thus thou bear'st an universal rule?
For thee the soldier quits his arms,
The king turns slave, the wise man fool.
In vain we chase thee from the field,
And with cool thoughts resist thy yoke:
Next tide of blood, alas, we yield,
And all those high resolves are broke!"

I like to have quotations for every occasion. They give one's ideas so pat, and save one the trouble of finding expression adequate to one's feelings. I think it is one of the greatest pleasures attending a poetic genius, that we can give our woes, cares, joys, loves, &c. an embodied form in verse, which to me is ever immediate ease. Goldsmith says finely of his Muse—

"Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe,
Thou found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so."

My limb has been so well to-day, that I have gone up and down stairs often without my staff. To-morrow

I hope to walk once again on my own legs to dinner. It is only next street. Adieu!

SYLVANDER.

XIV.

Tuesday Evening [Jan. 15, 1788.]

THAT you have faults, my Clarinda, I never doubted; but I knew not where they existed, and Saturday night made me more in the dark than ever. Oh Clarinda! why will you wound my soul by hinting that last night must have lessened my opinion of you? True, I was "behind the scenes" with you; but what did I see? A bosom glowing with honour and benevolence; a mind ennobled by genius, informed and refined by education and reflection, and exalted by native religion, genuine as in the climes of heaven; a heart formed for all the glorious meltings of friendship, love, and pity. These I saw: I saw the noblest immortal soul creation ever showed me.

I looked long, my dear Clarinda, for your letter; and am vexed that you are complaining. I have not caught you so far wrong as in your idea, that the commerce you have with *one* friend hurts you if you cannot tell every tittle of it to *another*. Why have so injurious a suspicion of a good God, Clarinda, as to think that friendship and Love, on the sacred inviolate principles of Truth, Honour, and Religion, can be anything else than an object of His divine approbation?

I have mentioned in some of my former scrawls, Saturday evening next. Do allow me to wait on you that evening. Oh, my angel! how soon must we part! and when can we meet again? I look forward on the horrid interval with tearful eyes. What have I lost by not knowing you sooner! I fear, I fear my

acquaintance with you is too short, to make that *lasting* impression on your heart I could wish.

SYLVANDER.

XV.

Saturday Morning [Jan. 19, 1788.]

THERE is no time, my Clarinda, when the conscious thrilling chords of love and friendship give such delight, as in the pensive hours of what our favourite Thomson calls "philosophic melancholy." The sportive insects, who bask in the sunshine of prosperity, or the worms, that luxuriant crawl amid their ample wealth of earth; they need no Clarinda—they would despise Sylvander, if they dared. The family of Misfortune, a numerous group of brothers and sisters! they need a resting-place to their souls. Unnoticed, often condemned by the world—in some degree, perhaps, condemned by themselves—they feel the full enjoyment of ardent love, delicate, tender endearments, mutual esteem, and mutual reliance.

In this light I have often admired religion. In proportion as we are wrung with grief, or distracted with anxiety, the ideas of a compassionate Deity, an Almighty Protector, are doubly dear.

"Tis this, my friend, that streaks our morning bright;

"Tis this that gilds the horrors of our night."

I have been this morning taking a peep through, as Young finely says, "the dark postern of time long elapsed;" and you will easily guess 'twas a rueful prospect. What a tissue of thoughtlessness, weakness, and folly! My life reminded me of a ruined temple: what strength, what proportion in some parts!—what unsightly gaps, what prostrate ruins in others! I kneeled down before the Father of Mercies, and said, "Father, I have

sinned against Heaven, and in Thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son!" I rose, eased and strengthened. I despise the superstition of a fanatic, but I love the religion of a man. "The future," said I to myself, "is still before me: there let me

'On reason build resolve—
That column of true majesty in man!'

I have difficulties many to encounter," said I; "but they are not absolutely insuperable: and where is firmness of mind shown, but in exertion? Mere declamation is bombast rant. Besides, wherever I am, or in whatever situation I may be,

—'Tis nought to me,
Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the void waste as in the city full;
And where He vital breathes, there must be joy."

Saturday Night, Half after Ten.

WHAT luxury of bliss I was enjoying this time yesternight! My ever dearest Clarinda, you have stolen away my soul: but you have refined, you have exalted it; you have given it a stronger sense of virtue, and a stronger relish for piety. Clarinda, first of your sex! if ever I am the veriest wretch on earth to forget you—if ever your lovely image is effaced from my soul,

"May I be lost, no eye to weep my end,
And find no earth that's base enough to bury me!"

What trifling silliness is the childish fondness of the every-day children of the world! 'Tis the unmeaning toying of the younglings of the fields and forests; but, where sentiment and fancy unite their sweets, where taste and delicacy refine, where wit adds the flavour, and good sense gives strength and spirit to all, what a delicious draught is the hour of tender endearment! Beauty and Grace in the arms of Truth and Honour, in all the luxury of mutual love!

Clarinda, have you ever seen the picture realized? Not in all its very richest colouring, but

"Hope, thou nurse of young Desire,
Fair promiser of Joy."

Last night, Clarinda, but for one slight shade, was the glorious picture—

—"Innocence
Look'd gaily smiling on; while rosy Pleasure
Hid young Desire amid her flowery wreath,
And pour'd her cup luxuriant, mantling high
The sparkling heav'nly vintage—Love and Bliss"

Clarinda, when a poet and poetess of Nature's making—two of Nature's noblest productions—when they drink together of the same cup of Love and Bliss, attempt not, ye coarser stuff of human nature, profanely to measure enjoyment ye never can know. Good-night, my dear Clarinda!

SYLVANDER.

XVI.

Sunday Night [Jan. 20, 1788.]

THE impertinence of fools has joined with a return of an old indisposition to make me good for nothing to-day. The paper has lain before me all this evening to write to my dear Clarinda; but—

"Fools rush'd on fools, as waves succeed to waves."

I cursed them in my soul: they sacrilegiously disturb my meditations on her who holds my heart. What a creature is man! A little alarm last night and to-day that I am mortal, has made such a revolution in my spirits! there is no philosophy, no divinity, comes half so home to the mind. I have no idea of courage that braves Heaven. 'Tis the wild ravings of an imaginary hero in Bedlam. I can no more, Clarinda; I can scarce hold up my head; but I am happy you don't know it, you would be so uneasy.

SYLVANDER.

Monday Morning.

I AM, my lovely friend, much better this morning, on the whole; but I have a horrid languor on my spirits—

"Sick of the world and all its joy,
My soul in pining sadness mourns:
Dark scenes of woe my mind employ,
The past and present in their turns."

Have you ever met with a saying of the great and likewise good Mr. Locke, author of the famous *Essay on the Human Understanding*? He wrote a letter to a friend, directing it "Not to be delivered till after my decease." It ended thus—"I know you loved me when living, and will preserve my memory now I am dead. All the use to be made of it is—that this life affords no solid satisfaction, but in the consciousness of having done well, and the hopes of another life. Adieu! I leave my best wishes with you.—J. LOCKE."

Clarinda, may I reckon on your friendship for life? I think I may. Thou Almighty Preserver of men! Thy friendship, which hitherto I have too much neglected, to secure it shall all the future days and nights of my life be my steady care! The idea of my Clarinda follows:—

"Hide it, my heart, within that close disguise,
Where, mix'd with God's, her loved idea lies."

But I fear inconstancy, the consequent imperfection of human weakness. Shall I meet with a friendship that defies years of absence, and the chances and changes of fortune? Perhaps "such things are." One honest man I have great hopes from, that way; but who, except a romance writer, would think on a *love* that could promise for life, in spite of distance, absence, chance, and change; and that, too, with slender hopes of fruition? For my own part, I can say to myself in both requisitions, "Thou art the man;" I dare, in cool resolve, I dare declare myself that friend and that lover. If woman-

kind is capable of such things, Clarinda is. I trust that she is; and feel I shall be miserable if she is not. There is not one virtue which gives worth, or one sentiment which does honour to the sex, that she does not possess superior to any woman I ever saw: her exalted mind, aided a little perhaps by her situation, is, I think, capable of that nobly-romantic love-enthusiasm.

May I see you on Wednesday evening, my dear angel? The next Wednesday again will, I conjecture, be a hated day to us both. I tremble for censorious remarks for your sake; but in extraordinary cases, may not usual and useful precautions be a little dispensed with? Three evenings, three swift-winged evenings, with pinions of down, are all the past—I dare not calculate the future. I shall call at Miss Nimmo's to-morrow evening; it will be a farewell call.

I have written out my last sheet of paper, so I am reduced to my last half-sheet. What a strange, mysterious faculty is that thing called imagination! We have no ideas almost at all of another world; but I have often amused myself with visionary schemes of what happiness might be enjoyed by small alterations—alterations that we can fully enter to in this present state of existence. For instance, suppose you and I just as we are at present, the same reasoning powers, sentiments, and even desires; the same fond curiosity for knowledge and remarking observation in our minds—and imagine our bodies free from pain, and the necessary supplies for the wants of nature at all times and easily within our reach; imagine further that we were set free from the laws of gravitation which bind us to this globe, and could at pleasure fly, without inconvenience, through all the yet un conjectured bounds of creation—what a life of bliss should we lead in

our mutual pursuit of virtue and knowledge, and our mutual enjoyment of friendship and love!

I see you laughing at my fairy fancies, and calling me a voluptuous Mahometan; but I am certain I should be a happy creature, beyond anything we call bliss here below; nay, it would be a paradise congenial to you too. Don't you see us hand in hand, or rather my arm about your lovely waist, making our remarks on Sirius, the nearest of the fixed stars; or surveying a comet flaming innoxious by us, as we just now would mark the passing pomp of a travelling monarch; or in a shady bower of Mercury or Venus, dedicating the hour to love and mutual converse, relying honour, and revelling endearment—while the most exalted strains of poesy and harmony would be the ready, spontaneous language of our souls? Devotion is the favourite employment of your heart, so is it of mine; what incentives then to, and powers for reverence, gratitude, faith, and hope, in all the fervours of adoration and praise to that Being whose unsearchable wisdom, power, and goodness, so pervaded, so inspired every sense and feeling! By this time, I daresay, you will be blessing the neglect of the maid that leaves me destitute of paper.

SYLVANDER.

XVII.

[Monday, Jan. 21, 1788.]

* * * I AM a discontented ghost, a perturbed spirit. Clarinda, if ever you forget Sylvander, may you be happy, but he will be miserable.

Oh, what a fool I am in love! what an extravagant prodigal of affection! Why are your sex called the tender sex, when I never have met with one who can repay me in

passion? They are either not so rich in love as I am, or they are niggards where I am lavish.

O Thou, whose I am, and whose are all my ways! Thou see'st me here, the hapless wreck of tides and tempests in my own bosom: do Thou direct to Thyself that ardent love, for which I have so often sought a return in vain from my fellow-creatures! If Thy goodness has yet such a gift in store for me as an equal return of affection from her who, Thou knowest, is dearer to me than life, do Thou bless and hallow our band of love and friendship; watch over us, in all our outgoings and incomings for good; and may the tie that unites our hearts be strong and indissoluble as the thread of man's immortal life!

I am just going to take your blackbird, the sweetest, I am sure, that ever sung, and prune its wings a little.

SYLVANDER.

XVIII.

Thursday Morning [Jan. 24, 1788.]

"Unlavish Wisdom never works in vain."

I HAVE been tasking my reason, Clarinda, why a woman, who, for native genius, poignant wit, strength of mind, generous sincerity of soul, and the sweetest female tenderness, is without a peer, and whose personal charms have few, very, very few parallels among her sex; why, or how she should fall to the blessed lot of a poor hairum-scaurum poet, whom Fortune had kept for her particular use, to wreak her temper on whenever she was in ill-humour. One time I conjectured, that as Fortune is the most capricious jade ever known, she may have taken, not a fit of remorse, but a paroxysm of whim, to raise the poor devil out of the mire, where he had so often and so conveniently served her as

a stepping-stone, and given him the most glorious boon she ever had in her gift, merely for the maggot's sake, to see how his fool head and his fool heart will bear it. At other times I was vain enough to think that Nature, who has a great deal to say with Fortune, had given the coquettish goddess some such hint as, "Here is a paragon of female excellence, whose equal, in all my former compositions, I never was lucky enough to hit on, and despair of ever doing so again; you have cast her rather in the shades of life; there is a certain poet of my making; among your frolics it would not be amiss to attach him to this masterpiece of my hand, to give her that immortality among mankind, which no woman of any age ever more deserved, and which few rhymesters of this age are better able to confer."

Evening, 9 o'clock.

I AM here, absolutely so unfit to finish my letter—pretty hearty after a bowl, which has been constantly plied since dinner till this moment. I have been with Mr. Schetki, the musician, and he has set the song finely. I have no distinct ideas of anything, but that I have drunk your health twice to-night, and that you are all my soul holds dear in this world.

SYLVANDER.

XIX.

[Mrs. M'Lehose had written:—"I am neither well nor happy to-day: my heart reproaches me for last night. If you wish Clarinda to regain her peace, determine against everything but what the strictest delicacy warrants. . . . Do not be displeased when I tell you I wish our parting was over. At a distance, we shall retain the same heartfelt affection and interestedness in each other's concerns; but absence will mellow and restrain those violent heart agitations

which, if continued much longer, would unhinge my very soul, and render me unfit for the duties of life."]

[Friday, Jan. 25, 1788.]

CLARINDA, my life, you have wounded my soul. Can I think of your being unhappy, even though it be not described in your pathetic elegance of language, without being miserable? Clarinda, can I bear to be told from you that "you will not see me to-morrow night—that you wish the hour of parting were come?" Do not let us impose on ourselves by sounds. If, in the moment of fond endearment and tender dalliance, I perhaps trespassed against the *letter* of decorum's law, I appeal to you whether I ever sinned, in the very least degree, against the *spirit* of the strictest statute? But why, my love, talk to me in such strong terms; every word of which cuts me to the very soul? You know, a hint, the slightest signification of your wish, is to me a sacred command.

Be reconciled, my angel, to your God, yourself, and me; and I pledge you Sylvander's honour—an oath I daresay you will trust without reserve—that you shall never more have reason to complain of his conduct. Now, my love, do not wound our next meeting with any averted looks or restrained caresses. I have marked the line of conduct—a line, I know, exactly to your taste—and which I will inviolably keep; but do not you show the least inclination to make boundaries. Seeming distrust, where you know you may confide, is a cruel sin against sensibility.

"Delicacy, you know, it was which won me to you at once: take care that you do not loosen the dearest, most sacred tie that unites us." Clarinda, I would not have stung *your* soul—I would not have bruised *your* spirit, as that harsh, crucifying

"Take care," did *mine*; no, not to have gained heaven! Let me again appeal to your dear self, if Sylvander, even when he seemingly half-transgressed the laws of decorum, if he did not show more chastised, trembling, faltering delicacy, than the many of the world do in keeping these laws?

O Love and Sensibility, ye have conspired against my peace! I love to madness, and I feel to torture! Clarinda, how can I forgive myself that I have ever touched a single chord in your bosom with pain! Would I do it willingly? Would any consideration, any gratification make me do so? Oh, did you love like me, you would not, you could not, deny or put off a meeting with the man who adores you; who would die a thousand deaths before he would injure you; and who must soon bid you a long farewell!

I had proposed bringing my bosom friend, Mr. Ainslie, to-morrow evening, at his strong request, to see you; as he has only time to stay with us about ten minutes, for an engagement. But I shall hear from you; this afternoon, for mercy's sake!—for, till I hear from you, I am wretched. Oh, Clarinda, the tie that binds me to thee is intertwined, incorporated with my dearest threads of life!

SYLVANDER.

XX.

[*Jan. 26, 1788.*]

I WAS on the way, my love, to meet you (I never do things by halves) when I got your card. Mr. Ainslie goes out of town to-morrow morning to see a brother of his, who is newly arrived from France. I am determined that he and I shall call on you together. So look you, lest I should never see to-morrow, we will call on you to-night. Mary and you may put off tea till about seven,

at which time, in the Galloway phrase, "an the beast be to the fore, and the branks bide hale," expect the humblest of your humble servants, and his dearest friend. We only propose staying half an hour—"for ought we ken." I could suffer the lash of misery eleven months in the year, were the twelfth to be composed of hours like yesternight. You are the soul of my enjoyment—all else is of the stuff of stocks and stones.

SYLVANDER.

XXI.

Sunday Noon [Jan. 27, 1788.]

I HAVE almost given up the Excise idea. I have been just now to wait on a great person, Miss ——'s friend ——. Why will great people not only deafen us with the din of their equipage, and dazzle us with their fastidious pomp, but they must also be so very dictatorily wise? I have been questioned like a child about my matters, and blamed and schooled for my inscription on the Stirling window. Come, Clarinda!—"Come, curse me Jacob; come, defy me Israel!"

Sunday Night.

I HAVE been with Miss Nimmo. She is indeed "a good soul," as my Clarinda finely says. She has reconciled me, in a good measure, to the world with her friendly prattle.

Schetki has sent me the song, set to a fine air of his composing. I have called the song "Clarinda": I have carried it about in my pocket, and hummed it over all day.

Monday Morning.

If my prayers have any weight in heaven, this morning looks in on you and finds you in the arms of peace, except where it is charmingly interrupted by the ardours of devotion. I find so much serenity of mind, so much positive pleasure, so

much fearless daring toward the world, when I warm in devotion, or feel the glorious sensation—a consciousness of Almighty friendship—that I am sure I shall soon be an honest enthusiast.

"How are thy servants blest, O Lord!
How sure is their defence!
Eternal wisdom is their guide,
Their help Omnipotence!"

I am, my dear Madam, yours,
SYLVANDER.

XXII.

Tuesday Morning [Jan. 29, 1788.]

I CANNOT go out to-day, my dearest love, without sending you half a line by way of a sin offering; but, believe me, 'twas the sin of ignorance. Could you think that I intended to hurt you by anything I said yesternight? Nature has been too kind to you for your happiness, your delicacy, your sensibility. Oh why should such glorious qualifications be the fruitful source of woe! You have "murdered sleep" to me last night. I went to bed impressed with an idea that you were unhappy; and every start I closed my eyes, busy Fancy painted you in such scenes of romantic misery, that I would almost be persuaded you are not well this morning.

—"If I unwitting have offended,
Impute it not"

—"But while we live
But one shall bear, perhaps, between us two
Let there be peace"

If Mary has not gone by the time this reaches you, give her my best compliments. She is a charming girl, and highly worthy of the noblest love.

I send you a poem to read till I call on you this night, which will be about nine. I wish I could procure some potent spell, some fairy charm, that would protect from injury, or

restore to rest, that bosom chord, "trembling alive all o'er," on which hangs your peace of mind. I thought, vainly I fear I thought, that the devotion of love—love strong as even you can feel, love guarded, invulnerably guarded, by all the purity of virtue, and all the pride of honour—I thought such a love might make you happy. Shall I be mistaken? I can no more for hurry.

SYLVANDER.

XXIII.

*Friday Morning, 7 o'clock.
[Feb. 1, 1788.]*

YOUR fears for Mary are truly laughable. I suppose, my love, you and I showed her a scene, which, perhaps, made her wish that she had a swain, and one who could love like me; and 'tis a thousand pities that so good a heart as hers should want an aim, an object. I am miserably stupid this morning. Yesterday I dined with a Baronet, and sat pretty late over the bottle. And "who hath woe—who hath sorrow? they that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine." Forgive me, likewise, a quotation from my favourite author. Solomon's knowledge of the world is very great. He may be looked on as the *Spectator* or *Adventurer* of his day: and it is, indeed, surprising what a sameness has ever been in human nature. The broken, but strongly characterising hints, that the royal author gives us of the manners of the court of Jerusalem and country of Israel are, in their great outlines, the same pictures that London and England, Versailles and France, exhibit some three thousand years later. The loves in the "Song of Songs" are all in the spirit of Lady M. W. Montagu, or Madame Ninon de l'Enclos; though, for my part, I dislike both

the ancient and modern voluptuaries; and will dare to affirm, that such an attachment as mine to Clarinda, and such evenings as she and I have spent, are what these greatly respectable and deeply experienced judges of life and love never dreamed of.

I shall be with you this evening between eight and nine, and shall keep as sober hours as you could wish.

I am ever, my dear Madam, yours,
SYLVANDER.

XXIV.

[*Mrs. M'Lehose had written:—"I believe nothing were a more impracticable task than to make you feel a little of genuine Gospel humility. Believe me, I wish not to see you deprived of that noble fire of an exalted mind which you eminently possess. Yet a sense of your faults—a feeling sense of them—were devoutly to be wished."*]

Sunday Morning [Feb. 3, 1788.]

I HAVE just been before the throne of my God, Clarinda; according to my association of ideas, my sentiments of love and friendship, I next devote myself to you. Yesternight I was happy—happiness that the world cannot give. I kindle at the recollection; but it is a flame where innocence looks smiling on, and honour stands by, a sacred guard. Your heart, your fondest wishes, your dearest thoughts, these are yours to bestow: your person is unapproachable by the laws of your country; and he loves not as I do who would make you miserable.

You are an angel, Clarinda; you are surely no mortal that "the earth owns." To kiss your hand, to live on your smile, is to me far more exquisite bliss than the dearest favours that the fairest of the sex, yourself excepted, can bestow.

Sunday Evening.

You are the constant companion of my thoughts. How wretched is the condition of one who is haunted with conscious guilt, and trembling under the idea of dreaded vengeance! and what a placid calm, what a charming secret enjoyment it gives, to bosom the kind feelings of friendship and the formal throes of love! Out upon the tempest of anger, the acrimonious gall of fretful impatience, the sullen frost of luring resentment, or the corroding poison of withered envy! They eat up the immortal part of man. If they spent their fury only on the unfortunate objects of them, it would be something in their favour; but these miserable passions, like traitor Iscariot, betray their lord and master.

Thou Almighty Author of peace, and goodness, and love! do Thou give me the social heart that kindly tastes of every man's cup! Is it a draught of joy?—warm and open my heart to share it with cordial, unenvying rejoicing. Is it the bitter potion of sorrow?—melt my heart with sincerely sympathetic woe. Above all, do Thou give me the manly mind that resolutely exemplifies, in life and manners, those sentiments which I would wish to be thought to possess. The friend of my soul; there, may I never deviate from the firmest fidelity and most active kindness! Clarinda, the dear object of my fondest love; there, may the most sacred inviolate honour, the most faithful kindling constancy, ever watch and animate my every thought and imagination!

Did you ever meet with the following lines spoken of religion—your darling topic?—

"*'Tis this, my friend, that streaks our morning bright;
'Tis this that gilds the horrors of our night;
When wealth forsakes us, and when friends are few,
When friends are faithless, or when foes pursue;*

'Tis this that wards the blow, or stills the smart,
 Disarms affliction or repels its dart;
 Without the breast buds purest rapture rise,
 Bids smiling Conscience spread her cloudless
 skies."

I met with these verses very early in life, and was so delighted with them, that I have them by me, copied at school.

Good-night and sound rest, my dearest Clarinda!

SYLVANDER.

XXV.

Thursday Night [Feb. 7, 1788.]

I CANNOT be easy, my Clarinda, while any sentiment respecting me in your bosom gives you pain. If there is no man on earth to whom your heart and affections are justly due, it may savour of imprudence, but never of criminality, to bestow that heart and those affections where you please. The God of love meant and made those delicious attachments to be bestowed on somebody; and even all the imprudence lies in bestowing them on an unworthy object. If this reasoning is conclusive, as it certainly is, I must be allowed to "talk of love."

It is, perhaps, rather wrong to speak highly to a friend of his letter: it is apt to lay one under a little restraint in their future letters, and restraint is the death of a friendly epistle; but there is one passage in your last charming letter, Thomson or Shenstone never exceeded it, nor often came up to it. I shall certainly steal it, and set it in some future poetic production, and get immortal fame by it. 'Tis when you bid the scenes of nature remind me of Clarinda. Can I forget you, Clarinda? I would detest myself as a tasteless, unfeeling, insipid, infamous blockhead. I have loved women of ordinary merit, whom I could have loved for ever. You are the first, the only unexceptionable individual of the beauteous sex that

I ever met with; and never woman more entirely possessed my soul. I know myself, and how far I can depend on passion's swell. It has been my peculiar study.

I thank you for going to Miers. Urge him, for necessity calls, to have it done by the middle of next week: Wednesday the latest day. I want it for a breast-pin, to wear next my heart. I propose to keep sacred set times, to wander in the woods and wilds for meditation on you. Then, and only then, your lovely image shall be produced to the day, with a reverence akin to devotion.

* * * * *

To-morrow night shall not be the last. Good-night! I am perfectly stupid, as I supped late yesternight.

SYLVANDER.

XXVI.

[Feb. 13, 1788.]

MY EVER DEAREST CLARINDA,

I make a numerous dinner-party wait me while I read yours and write this. Do not require that I should cease to love you, to adore you in my soul; 'tis to me impossible: your peace and happiness are to me dearer than my soul. Name the terms on which you wish to see me, to correspond with me, and you have them. I must love, pine, mourn, and adore in secret: this you must not deny me. You will ever be to me

"Dear as the light that visits those sad eyes,
 Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart."

I have not patience to read the Puritanic scrawl. Damned sophistry! Ye heavens, thou God of nature, thou Redeemer of mankind! ye look down with approving eyes on a passion inspired by the purest flame, and guarded by truth, delicacy, and honour; but the half-inch soul of an unfeeling, cold-blooded, pitiful Presbyterian bigot cannot forgive

anything above his dungeon-bosom and foggy head.

Farewell! I'll be with you to-morrow evening; and be at rest in your mind. I will be yours in the way you think most to your happiness. I dare not proceed. I love, and will love you; and will, with joyous confidence, approach the throne of the Almighty Judge of men with your dear idea; and will despise the scum of sentiment and the mist of sophistry.

SYLVANDER.

XXVII.

Wednesday, Midnight [Feb. 13, 1788.]

MADAM,

After a wretched day, I am preparing for a sleepless night. I am going to address myself to the Almighty Witness of my actions—some time, perhaps very soon, my Almighty Judge. I am not going to be the advocate of Passion: be Thou my inspirer and testimony, O God, as I plead the cause of truth!

I have read over your friend's haughty, dictatorial letter; you are only answerable to your God in such a matter. Who gave any fellow-creature of yours (a fellow-creature incapable of being your judge, because not your peer) a right to catechise, scold, undervalue, abuse, and insult, wantonly and unhumanly to insult, you thus? I don't wish, not even wish, to deceive you, Madam. The Searcher of hearts is my witness how dear you are to me; but though it were possible you could be still dearer to me, I would not even kiss your hand at the expense of your conscience. Away with declamation! let us appeal to the bar of common sense. It is not mousing everything sacred; it is not vague ranting assertions; it is not assuming, haughtily and insultingly assuming, the dictatorial language

of a Roman pontiff, that must dissolve a union like ours. Tell me, Madam, are you under the least shadow of an obligation to bestow your love, tenderness, caresses, affections, heart and soul, on Mr. M'Lehose—the man who has repeatedly, habitually, and barbarously broken through every tie of duty, nature, or gratitude to you? The laws of your country, indeed, for the most useful reasons of policy and sound government, have made your person inviolate; but are your heart and affections bound to one who gives not the least return of either to you? You cannot do it; it is not in the nature of things that you are bound to do it; the common feelings of humanity forbid it. Have you, then, a heart and affections which are no man's right? You have. It would be highly, ridiculously absurd to suppose the contrary. Tell me, then, in the name of common sense, can it be wrong, is such a supposition compatible with the plainest ideas of right and wrong, that it is improper to bestow the heart and these affections on another—while that bestowing is not in the smallest degree hurtful to your duty to God, to your children, to yourself, or to society at large?

This is the great test; the consequences: let us see them. In a widowed, forlorn, lonely situation, with a bosom glowing with love and tenderness, yet so delicately situated that you cannot indulge these nobler feelings except you meet with a man who has a soul capable of . . .

SYLVANDER.

XXVIII.

[Feb. 14, 1788.]

"I AM distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan." I have suffered, Clarinda, from your letter. My soul was in arms at the sad perusal, I

dreaded that I had acted wrong. If I have wronged you, God forgive me. But, Clarinda, be comforted! Let us raise the tone of our feelings a little higher and bolder. A fellow-creature who leaves us—who spurns us without just cause, though once our bosom friend—up with a little honest pride: let him go! How shall I comfort you, who am the cause of the injury? Can I wish that I had never seen you—that we had never met? No, I never will. But, have I thrown you friendless?—there is almost distraction in the thought. Father of mercies! against Thee often have I sinned: through Thy grace I will endeavour to do so no more. She who, Thou knowest, is dearer to me than myself—pour Thou the balm of peace into her past wounds, and hedge her about with Thy peculiar care, all her future days and nights. Strengthen her tender, noble mind firmly to suffer and magnanimously to bear. Make me worthy of that friendship, that love she honours me with. May my attachment to her be pure as devotion, and lasting as immortal life! O Almighty Goodness, hear me! Be to her at all times, particularly in the hour of distress or trial, a friend and comforter, a guide and guard.

"How are thy servants blest, O Lord,
How sure is thy defence!
Eternal wisdom is their guide,
Their help Omnipotence"

Forgive me, Clarinda, the injury I have done you. To-night I shall be with you, as indeed I shall be ill at ease till I see you.

SYLVANDER.

XXIX.

Two o'clock [Feb. 14, 1788.]

I JUST now received your first letter of yesterday, by the careless negligence of the penny-post. Clarinda, matters are grown very serious with

us; then seriously hear me, and hear me, Heaven—I met you, my dear Clarinda, by far the first of woman-kind, at least to me; I esteemed, I loved you at first sight; the longer I am acquainted with you, the more innate amiableness and worth I discover in you. You have suffered a loss, I confess, for my sake; but if the firmest, steadiest, warmest friendship—if every endeavour to be worthy of your friendship—if a love, strong as the ties of nature, and holy as the duties of religion—if all these can make anything like a compensation for the evil I have occasioned you, if they be worth your acceptance, or can in the least add to your enjoyments—so help Sylvander, ye Powers above, in his hour of need, as he freely gives these all to Clarinda!

I esteem you, I love you as a friend; I admire you, I love you as a woman beyond any one in all the circle of creation; I know I shall continue to esteem you, to love you, to pray for you—nay, to pray for myself for your sake.

Expect me at eight—and believe me to be ever, my dearest Madam,

Yours most entirely,

SYLVANDER.

XXX.

[Feb. 15, 1788.]

WHEN matters, my love, are desperate, we must put on a desperate face—

"On reason build resolve,
That column of true majesty in man"—

or, as the same author finely says in another place,

"Let thy soul spring up
And lay strong hold for help on Him that made thee."

I am yours, Clarinda, for life. Never be discouraged at all this. Look forward: in a few weeks I shall be somewhere or other, out of the

possibility of seeing you ; till then, I shall write you often, but visit you seldom. Your fame, your welfare, your happiness, are dearer to me than any gratification whatever. Be comforted, my love ! the present moment is the worst ; the lenient hand of time is daily and hourly either lightening the burden, or making us insensible to the weight. None of these friends—I mean Mr. — and the other gentleman—can hurt your worldly support ; and of their friendship, in a little time you will learn to be easy, and by and by to be happy without it. A decent means of livelihood in the world, an approving God, a peaceful conscience, and one firm trusty friend—can anybody that has these be said to be unhappy ? These are yours.

To-morrow evening I shall be with you about eight, probably for the last time till I return to Edinburgh. In the meantime, should any of these two unlucky friends question you respecting me, whether I am *the man*, I do not think they are entitled to any information. As to their jealousy and spying, I despise them. Adieu, my dearest Madam !

SYLVANDER.

XXXI.

[On the 18th of February, Burns left Edinburgh for Mossgiel, visiting Glasgow and Kilmarnock on his way.]

GLASGOW, Monday Evening,
Nine o'clock [Feb. 18, 1788.]

THE attraction of love, I find, is in an inverse proportion to the attraction of the Newtonian philosophy. In the system of Sir Isaac, the nearer objects are to one another, the stronger is the attractive force. In my system, every milestone that marked my progress from Clarinda,

awakened a keener pang of attachment to her. How do you feel, my love ? Is your heart ill at ease ? I fear it. God forbid that these persecutors should harass that peace, which is more precious to me than my own. Be assured I shall ever think on you, muse on you, and in my moments of devotion, pray for you. The hour that you are not in my thoughts, "be that hour darkness ; let the shadows of death cover it ; let it not be numbered in the hours of the day !"

"When I forget the darling theme,
Be my tongue mute ! my fancy paint no more !
And, dead to joy, forget my heart to beat !"

I have just met with my old friend, the ship captain—guess my pleasure : to meet you could alone have given me more. My brother William, too, the young saddler, has come to Glasgow to meet me ; and here are we three spending the evening.

I arrived here too late to write by post ; but I'll wrap half-a-dozen sheets of blank paper together, and send it by the Fly, under the name of a parcel. You will hear from me next post-town. I would write you a longer letter, but for the present circumstances of my friend.

Adieu, my Clarinda ! I am just going to propose your health by way of grace-drink.

SYLVANDER.

XXXII.

KILMARNOCK, Friday [Feb. 22.]

I WROTE you, my dear Madam, the moment I alighted in Glasgow. Since then I have not had opportunity ; for in Paisley, where I arrived next day, my worthy, wise friend Mr. Pattison did not allow me a moment's respite. I was there ten hours ; during which time I was introduced to nine men worth six thousands ; five men worth ten thousands ; his brother, richly worth

twenty thousands; and a young weaver, who will have thirty thousands good when his father, who has no more children than the said weaver, and a Whig kirk, dies. Mr. P. was bred a zealous Anti-burgher; but, during his widowhood, he has found their strictness incompatible with certain compromises he is often obliged to make with those powers of darkness—the devil, the world, and the flesh: so he, good, merciful man! talked privately to me of the absurdity of eternal torments; the liberality of sentiment in indulging the honest instincts of nature: the mysteries of . . . &c. He has a son, however, that at sixteen, has repeatedly insisted on certain privileges, only proper for sober, staid men, who can use the good things of this life without abusing them; but the father's parental vigilance has hitherto hedged him in, amid a corrupt and evil world. His only daughter, who, "if the beast be to the fore, and the branks bide hale," will have seven thousand pounds when her old father steps into the dark factory-office of eternity with his well-thrummed web of life, has put him again and again in a commendable fit of indignation by requesting a harpsichord "Oh these boarding-schools!" exclaims my prudent friend: "she was a good spinner and sewer till I was advised by her foes and mine to give her a year of Edinburgh!"

After two bottles more, my much-respected friend opened up to me a project—a legitimate child of Wisdom and Good Sense: 'twas no less than a long-thought-on and deeply-matured design, to marry a girl fully as elegant in her form as the famous priestess whom Saul consulted in his last hours, and who had been second maid of honour to his deceased wife. This, you may be sure, I highly applauded; so I

hope for a pair of gloves by and by. I spent the two bypast days at Dunlop House, with that worthy family to whom I was deeply indebted early in my poetic career; and in about two hours I shall present your "twa wee sarkies" to the little fellow. My dearest Clarinda, you are ever present with me; and these hours, that drawl by among the fools and rascals of this world, are only supportable in the idea, that they are the forerunners of that happy hour that ushers me to "the mistress of my soul." Next week I shall visit Dumfries, and next again return to Edinburgh. My letters, in these hurrying dissipated hours, will be heavy trash; but you know the writer. God bless you!

SYLVANDER.

XXXIII.

[MOSSGIEL, *Sat.*, Feb. 23, 1788.]

I HAVE just now, my ever dear Madam, delivered your kind present to my sweet little Bobbie, whom I find a very fine fellow. Your letter was waiting me. Your interview with Mr. Kemp opens a wound, ill-closed, in my breast; not that I think his friendship of so much consequence to you, but because you set such a value on it.

Now for a little news that will please you. I, this morning, as I came home, called for a certain woman [Jean Armour]. I am disgusted with her—I cannot endure her! I, while my heart smote me for the profanity, tried to compare her with my Clarinda; 'twas setting the expiring glimmer of a farthing taper beside the cloudless glory of the meridian sun. *Here* was tasteless insipidity, vulgarity of soul, and mercenary learning, *here* polished gool sense, Heaven-born genius, and the most generous, the most delicate, and the most tender passion.

I have done with her, and she with me.

I set off to-morrow for Dumfries-shire. 'Tis merely out of compliment to Mr. Miller; for I know the Indies must be my lot. I will write you from Dumfries, if these horrid postages don't frighten me.

"Whatever place, whatever land I see,
My heart, untravell'd, fondly turns to thee;
Still to 'Clarinda' turns with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthen'd chain."

I just stay to write you a few lines, before I go to call on my friend, Mr. Gavin Hamilton. I hate myself as an unworthy sinner, because these interviews of old dear friends make me, for half a moment, almost forget Clarinda.

Remember to-morrow evening, at eight o'clock, I shall be with the Father of Mercies, at that hour on your account. Farewell! If the post goes not to-night, I'll finish the other page to-morrow morning.—

SYLVANDER.

P.S.—Remember.

XXXIV.

CUMNOCK, *2d March, 1788.*

I HOPE, and am certain, that my generous Clarinda will not think my silence, for now a long week, has been in any degree owing to my forgetfulness. I have been tossed about through the country ever since I wrote you; and am here, returning from Dumfries-shire, at an inn, the post-office of the place, with just so long time as my horse eats his corn, to write you. I have been hurried with business and dissipation almost equal to the insidious decree of the Persian monarch's mandate, when he forbade asking petition of God or man for forty days. Had the venerable prophet been as throng [busy] as I, he had not broken the decree, at least not thrice a-day.

I am thinking my farming scheme will yet hold. A worthy, intelligent farmer, my father's friend and my own, has been with me on the spot: he thinks the bargain practicable. I am myself, on a more serious review of the lands, much better pleased with them. I won't mention this in writing to anybody but you and Mr. Ainslie. Don't accuse me of being fickle: I have the two plans of life before me, and I wish to adopt the one most likely to procure me independence. I shall be in Edinburgh next week. I long to see you: your image is omnipresent to me; nay, I am convinced I would soon idolatrize it most seriously—so much do absence and memory improve the medium through which one sees the much-loved object. To-night, at the sacred hour of eight, I expect to meet you—at the Throne of Grace. I hope, as I go home to-night, to find a letter from you at the post-office in Mauchline. I have just once seen that dear hand since I left Edinburgh—a letter indeed which much affected me. Tell me, first of womankind! will my warmest attachment, my sincerest friendship, my correspondence—will they be any compensation for the sacrifices you make for my sake? If they will, they are yours. If I settle on the farm I propose, I am just a day and a half's ride from Edinburgh. We will meet—don't you say "Perhaps too often!"

Farewell, my fair, my charming poetess! May all good things ever attend you!

I am ever, my dearest Madam, yours,

SYLVANDER.

XXXV.

MAUCHLINE [*March 6, 1788.*]

I OWN myself guilty, Clarinda: I should have written you last week.

But when you recollect, my dearest Madam, that yours of this night's post is only the third I have from you, and that this is the fifth or sixth I have sent to you, you will not reproach me, with a good grace, for unkindness. I have always some kind of idea not to sit down to write a letter, except I have time, and possession of my faculties, so as to do some justice to my letter; which at present is rarely my situation. For instance, yesterday I dined at a friend's at some distance: the savage hospitality of this country spent me the most part of the night over the nauseous potion in the bowl. This day—sick—headache—low spirits—miserable—fasting, except for a draught of water or small beer. Now eight o'clock at night; only able to crawl ten minutes' walk into Mauchline, to wait the post, in the pleasurable hope of hearing from the mistress of my soul.

But truce with all this! When I sit down to write to you, all is harmony and peace. A hundred times a day do I figure you before your taper, your book or work laid aside as I get within the room. How happy have I been! and how little of that scantling portion of time, called the life of man, is sacred to happiness, much less transport.

I could moralise to-night like a death's-head.

"O what is life, that thoughtless wish of all!
A drop of honey in a draught of gall."

Nothing astonishes me more, when a little sickness clogs the wheels of life, than the thoughtless career we run in the hour of health. "None saith, Where is God, my Maker, that giveth songs in the night: who teacheth us more knowledge than the beasts of the field, and more understanding than the fowls of the air?"

Give me, my Maker, to remember

Thee! Give me to act up to the dignity of my nature! Give me to feel "another's woe"; and continue with me that dear loved friend that feels with mine!

The dignifying and dignified consciousness of an honest man, and the well-grounded trust in approving Heaven, are two most substantial foundations of happiness. . . .

I could not have written a page to any mortal except yourself. I'll write you by Sunday's post. Adieu! Good-night!

SYLVANDER.

XXXVI.

MOSSGIEL, *7th March, 1788.*

CLARINDA, I have been so stung with your reproach for unkindness—a sin so unlike me, a sin I detest more than a breach of the whole Decalogue, fifth, sixth, seventh, and ninth articles excepted—that I believe I shall not rest in my grave about it, if I die before I see you. You have often allowed me the head to judge and the heart to feel the influence of female excellence: was it not blasphemy then, against your own charms and against my feelings, to suppose that a short fortnight could abate my passion?

You, my love, may have your cares and anxieties to disturb you; but they are the usual occurrences of life. Your future views are fixed, and your mind in a settled routine. Could not you, my ever dearest Madam, make a little allowance for a man, after long absence, paying a short visit to a country full of friends, relations, and early intimates? Cannot you guess, my Clarinda, what thoughts, what cares, what anxious forebodings, hopes, and fears, must crowd the breast of the man of keen sensibility, when no less is on the *tapis* than his aim, his employment, his very existence through future life?

To be overtopped in anything else, I can bear ; but in the tests of generous love, I defy all mankind ! not even to the tender, the fond, the loving Clarinda ; she whose strength of attachment, whose melting soul, may vie with Eloise and Sappho ; not even she can overpay the affection she owes me !

Now that, not my apology, but my defence is made, I feel my soul respire more easily. I know you will go along with me in my justification : would to Heaven you could in my adoption, too ! I mean an adoption beneath the stars—an adoption where I might revel in the immediate beams of her

“The bright sun of all her sex.”

I would not have you, my dear Madam, so much hurt at Miss Nimmo's coldness. 'Tis placing yourself below her, an honour she by no means deserves. We ought, when we wish to be economists in happiness—we ought, in the first place, to fix the standard of our own character ; and when, on full examination, we know where we stand, and how much ground we occupy, let us contend for it as property ; and those who seem to doubt or deny us what is justly ours, let us either pity their prejudices or despise their judgment. I know, my dear, you will say this is self-conceit : but I call it self-knowledge : the one is the overweening opinion of a fool, who fancies himself to be what he wishes himself to be thought ; the other is the honest justice that a man of sense, who has thoroughly examined the subject, owes to himself. Without this standard, this column in our own mind, we are perpetually at the mercy of the petulance, the mistakes, the prejudices, nay, the very weakness and wickedness of our fellow-creatures.

I urge this, my dear, both to confirm myself in the doctrine which,

I assure you, I sometimes need, and because I know that this causes you often much disquiet. To return to Miss Nimmo. She is most certainly a worthy soul ; and equalled by very, very few in goodness of heart. But can she boast more goodness of heart than Clarinda ? Not even prejudice will dare to say so. For penetration and discernment, Clarinda sees far beyond her. To wit, Miss Nimmo dare make no pretence : to Clarinda's wit, scarce any of her sex dare make any pretence. Personal charms, it would be ridiculous to run the parallel ; and for conduct in life, Miss Nimmo was never called out, either much to do, or to suffer. Clarinda has been both ; and has performed her part, where Miss Nimmo would have sunk at the bare idea.

Away, then, with these disquietudes ! Let us pray with the honest weaver of Kilbarchan, “Lord, send us a gude conceit o' oursel' !” or in the words of the auld sang,

“Who does me disdain, I can scorn them again,
And I'll never mind any such foes.”

There is an error in the commerce of intimacy, which has led me far astray. . . . Happy is our lot, indeed, when we meet with an honest merchant, who is qualified to deal with us on our own terms ; but that is a rarity : with almost everybody we must pocket our pearls, less or more, and learn, in the old Scots phrase, “To gie sic like as we get.” For this reason we should try to erect a kind of bank or storehouse in our own mind ; or, as the Psalmist recommends, “We should commune with our own hearts and be still.” . . .

I wrote you yesternight, which will reach you long before this can. I may write Mr. Ainslie before I see him, but I am not sure.

Farewell ! and remember

SYLVANDER.

XXXVII.

EDINBURGH, *Monday Noon*
[17th March, 1788.]

I WILL meet you to-morrow, Clarinda, as you appoint. My Excise affair is just concluded, and I have got my order for instructions: so far good. Wednesday night I am engaged to sup among some of the principals of the Excise, so can only make a call for you that evening; but next day, I stay to dine with one of the Commissioners, so cannot go till Friday morning.

Your hopes, your fears, your cares, my love, are mine; so don't mind them. I will take you in my hand through the dreary wilds of this world, and scare away the ravening bird or beast that would annoy you. I saw Mary in town to-day, and asked her if she had seen you. I shall certainly bespeak Mr. Ainslie, as you desire.

Excuse me, my dearest angel, this hurried scrawl and miserable paper: circumstances make both. Farewell till to-morrow.

SYLVANDER.

XXXVIII.

Tuesday Morning
[18th March, 1788.]

I AM just hurrying away to wait on the Great Man, Clarinda; but I have more respect to my own peace and happiness than to set out without waiting on you; for my imagination, like a child's favourite bird, will fondly flutter along with this scrawl, till it perch on your bosom. I thank you for all the happiness you bestowed on me yesterday. The walk—delightful; the evening—rapture. Do not be uneasy to-day, Clarinda; forgive me. I am in rather better spirits to-day, though I had but an indifferent night. Care, anxiety, sat on my spirits; and all the cheerful-

ness of this morning is the fruit of some serious, important ideas that lie, in their realities, beyond "the dark and the narrow house," as Ossian, prince of poets, says. The Father of Mercies be with you, Clarinda! and every good thing attend you!

SYLVANDER.

XXXIX.

Wednesday Morning
[19th March, 1788.]

CLARINDA, will that envious night-cap hinder you from appearing at the window as I pass? "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning; fair as the sun, clear as the moon, terrible as an army with banners?"

Do not accuse me of fond folly for this line; you know I am a cool lover. I mean by these presents greeting, to let you to wit, that arch-rascal Creech has not done my business yesternight, which has put off my leaving town till Monday morning. To-morrow at eleven I meet with him for the last time; just the hour I should have met far more agreeable company.

You will tell me this evening whether you cannot make our hour of meeting to-morrow one o'clock. I have just now written Creech such a letter, that the very goose-feather in my hand shrunk back from the line, and seemed to say, "I exceedingly fear and quake!" I am forming ideal schemes of vengeance. O for a little of my will on him! I just wished he loved as I do—as glorious an object as Clarinda—and that he were doomed.—Adieu, and think on

SYLVANDER.

XL.

Friday, Nine o'clock, Night
[21st March, 1788.]

I AM just now come in, and have read your letter. The first thing I

did was to thank the divine Disposer of events, that He has had such happiness in store for me as the connexion I have with you. Life, my Clarinda, is a weary, barren path; and woe be to him or her that ventures on it alone! For me, I have my dearest partner of my soul: Clarinda and I will make out our pilgrimage together. Wherever I am, I shall constantly let her know how I go on, what I observe in the world around me, and what adventures I meet with. Will it please you, my love, to get every week, or at least every fortnight, a packet, two or three sheets, full of remarks, nonsense, news, rhymes, and old songs? Will you open, with satisfaction and delight, a letter from a man who loves you, who has loved you, and who will love you to death, through death, and for ever? Oh, Clarinda! what do I owe to Heaven for blessing me with such a piece of exalted excellence as you! I call over your idea, as a miser counts over his treasure. Tell me, were you studious to please me last night? I am sure you did it to transport. How rich am I who have such a treasure as you? You know me; you know how to make me happy; and you do it most effectually. God bless you with

"Long life, long youth, long pleasure, and a friend!"

To-morrow night, according to your own direction, I shall watch the window: 'tis the star that guides me to paradise. The great relish to all is, that Honour, that Innocence, that Religion, are the witnesses and guarantees of our happiness. "The Lord God knoweth," and perhaps "Israel he shall know," my love and your merit. Adieu, Clarinda! I am going to remember you in my prayers.

SYLVANDER.

XLI.

ELLISLAND, 9th March, 1789.

MADAM,

The letter you wrote me to Heron's carried its own answer in its bosom; you forbade me to write you, unless I was willing to plead guilty to a certain indictment that you were pleased to bring against me. As I am convinced of my own innocence, and though conscious of high imprudence and egregious folly, can lay my hand on my breast and attest the rectitude of my heart, you will pardon me, Madam, if I do not carry my complaisance so far as humbly to acquiesce in the name of villain, merely out of compliment to your opinion, much as I esteem your judgment, and warmly as I regard your worth.

I have already told you, and I again aver it, that at the period of time alluded to I was not under the smallest moral tie to Mrs. Burns; nor did I, nor could I, then know all the powerful circumstances that omnipotent necessity was busy laying in wait for me. When you call over the scenes that have passed between us, you will survey the conduct of an honest man, struggling successfully with temptations the most powerful that ever beset humanity, and preserving untainted honour in situations where the austere virtue would have forgiven a fall; situations that, I will dare to say, not a single individual of all his kind, even with half his sensibility and passion, could have encountered without ruin; and I leave you to guess, Madam, how such a man is likely to digest an accusation of perfidious treachery.

Was I to blame, Madam, in being the distracted victim of charms which, I affirm it, no man ever approached with impunity? Had I seen the least glimmering of hope that these charms could ever have

been mine, or even had not iron Necessity—but these are unavailing words.

I would have called on you when I was in town—indeed, I could not have resisted it—but that Mr. Ainslie told me that you were determined to avoid your windows while I was in town, lest even a glance of me should occur in the street.

When I have regained your good opinion, perhaps I may venture to solicit your friendship; but, be that as it may, the first of her sex I ever knew shall always be the object of my warmest good wishes.—R. B.

XLII.

[ELLISLAND, Feb. 1790.]

I HAVE indeed been ill, Madam, the whole winter. An incessant headache, depression of spirits, and all the truly miserable consequences of a deranged nervous system, have made dreadful havoc of my health and peace. Add to all this, a line of life into which I have lately entered obliges me to ride, on the average, at least 200 miles every week. However, thank Heaven, I am now greatly better in my health. . . .

I could not answer your last letter but one. When you in so many words tell a man that you look on his letters with a smile of contempt, in what language, Madam, can he answer you? Though I were conscious that I had acted wrong—and I am conscious I have acted wrong—yet would I not be bullied into repentance.

I cannot, will not, enter into extenuatory circumstances; else I could show you how my precipitate, headlong, unthinking conduct leagued with a conjuncture of unlucky events to thrust me out of a possibility of keeping the path of rectitude to curse me, by an irreconcilable war between my

duty and my nearest wishes, and to damn me with a choice only of different species of error and misconduct.

I dare not trust myself further with this subject. The following song is one of my latest productions, and I send it you as I would do anything else, because it pleases myself.

R. B.

[Here follows "To Mary in Heaven."]

XLIII.

Aug. 1791.

I HAVE received both your last letters, Madam, and ought and would have answered the first long ago. But on what subject shall I write you? How can you expect a correspondent should write you when you declare that you mean to preserve his letters, with a view, sooner or later, to expose them in the pillory of derision and the rock of criticism? This is gagging me completely as to speaking the sentiments of my bosom; else, Madam, I could perhaps too truly

"Join grief with grief, and echo sighs to thine!"

I have perused your most beautiful but most pathetic poem; do not ask me how often, or with what emotions. You know that "I dare to *sin*, but not to *lie*." Your verses wring the confession from my inmost soul, that—I will say it, expose it if you please—that I have more than once in my life been the victim of a damning conjuncture of circumstances; and that to see you must be ever

"Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes."

I have just, since I had yours, composed the following stanzas. Let me know your opinion of them.

"Sensibility, how charming," &c.

R. B.

XLIV.

DUMFRIES, *Nov. 23, 1791.*

It is extremely difficult, my dear Madam, for me to deny a lady anything; but to a lady whom I regard with all the endearing epithets of respectful esteem and old friendship, how shall I find the language of refusal? I have, indeed, a shade of the lady, which I keep, and shall ever keep in the *sanctum sanctorum* of my most anxious care. That lady, though an unfortunate and irresistible conjuncture of circumstances has lost me her esteem, yet she shall be ever to me—

"Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart."

I am rather anxious for her sake, as to her voyage. I pray God my fears may be groundless. By the way, I have this moment a letter from her, with a paragraph or two conceived in so stately a style, that I would not pardon it in any created being except herself; but, as the subject interests me much, I shall answer it to you, as I do not know her present address. I am sure she must have told you of a girl, a Jenny Clow, who had the misfortune to make me a father (with contrition I own it), contrary to the laws of our most excellent constitution, in our holy Presbyterian hierarchy.

Mrs. M— tells me a tale of the poor girl's distress that makes my very heart weep blood. I will trust that your goodness will apologize to your delicacy for me, when I beg of you, for Heaven's sake, to send a porter to the poor woman (Mrs. M., it seems, knows where she is to be found), with five shillings in my name; and, as I shall be in Edinburgh on Tuesday first, for certain, make the poor wench leave a line for me, before Tuesday, at Mr. Mackay's, White Hart Inn, Grass-market, where I shall put up; and, before I am two hours in town, I

shall see the girl, and try what is to be done for her relief. I would have taken my boy from her long ago, but she would never consent.

I shall do myself the very great pleasure to call for you when I come to town, and repay you the sum your goodness shall have advanced. * * * and most obedient.

ROBT. BURNS.

XLV.

DUMFRIES, *15th December, 1791.*

I HAVE some merit, my ever dearest of women, in attracting and securing the honest heart of Clarinda. In her I meet with the most accomplished of all woman-kind, the first of all God's works, and yet I, even I, have the good fortune to appear amiable in her sight.

By the by, this is the sixth letter that I have written since I left you; and if you were an ordinary being, as you are a creature very extraordinary—an instance of what God Almighty, in the plenitude of His power and the fulness of His goodness can make!—I would never forgive you for not answering my letters.

I have sent your hair, a part of the parcel you gave me, with a measure, to Mr. Brice, the jeweller, to get a ring done for me. I have likewise sent the verses "On Sensibility," altered to—

"Sensibility, how charming,
Dearest Nancy, thou canst tell," &c.

to the editor of "Scots Songs," of which you have three volumes, to set to a most beautiful air—out of compliment to the first of women, my ever-beloved, my ever-sacred Clarinda.

I shall probably write you to-morrow. In the meantime, from a man who is literally drunk, accept and forgive!—R. B.

XLVI.

[*Poor Mrs. M'Lehose, finding her brutal husband's company quite unbearable, and her health breaking down, returned from Jamaica in August, 1792; but Burns, apparently, did not know till some time afterwards.*]

DUMFRIES, *March, 1793.*

I SUPPOSE, my dear Madam, that by your neglecting to inform me of your arrival in Europe—a circumstance that could not be indifferent to me, as indeed no occurrence relating to you can—you meant to leave me to guess and gather that a correspondence I once had the honour and felicity to enjoy is to be no more. Alas! what heavy-laden sounds are these—"No more!" The wretch who has never tasted pleasure has never known woe: what drives the soul to madness is the recollection of joys that are "no more!" But this is not language to the world: they do not understand it. But come, ye few—the children of feeling and sentiment!—ye whose trembling bosom-chords ache to unutterable anguish as recollection gushes on the heart!—ye who are capable of an attachment keen as the arrows of Death, and strong as the vigour of immortal being—come! and your ears shall drink a tale—But hush! I must not, cannot, tell it; agony is in the recollection, and frenzy in the recital!

But, Madam, to leave the paths that lead to madness, I congratulate your friends on your return; and I hope that the precious health, which Miss P. tells me is so much injured, is restored or restoring. . . .

I present you a book; may I hope you will accept it? I daresay you will have brought your books with you. The fourth vol. of the "Scots Songs" is published. I will presume to send it you. Shall I hear from you? But first hear me. No cold

language—no prudential documents: I despise advice and scorn control. If you are not to write such language, such sentiments, as you know I shall wish, shall delight to receive, I conjure you, by wounded pride, by ruined peace, by frantic disappointed passion, by all the many ills that constitute that sum of human woes, a broken heart!!! to me be silent for ever. If ever you insult me with the unfeeling apophthegms of cold-blooded caution, may all the—but hold! A fiend could not breathe a malevolent wish on the head of an angel! Mind my request. If you send me a page baptised in the font of sanctimonious prudence, by heaven, earth, and hell, I will tear it to atoms! Adieu! May all good things attend you.

R. B.

XLVII.

CASTLE DOUGLAS, *25th June, 1794.*

BEFORE you ask me why I have not written you, first let me be informed by you, *how* I shall write you? "In friendship," you say; and I have many a time taken up my pen to try an epistle of "friendship" to you, but it will not do; 'tis like Jove grasping a popgun after having wielded his thunder. When I take up the pen, recollection ruins me. Ah, my ever-dearest Clarinda! Clarinda! What a host of memory's tenderest offspring crowd on my fancy at that sound! But I must not indulge that subject; you have forbidden it.

I am extremely happy to learn that your precious health is re-established, and that you are once more fit to enjoy that satisfaction in existence which health alone can give us. My old friend Ainslie has indeed been kind to you. Tell him, that I envy him the power of serving you. I had a letter from him a while ago,

but it was so dry, so distant, so like a card to one of his clients, that I could scarce bear to read it, and have not yet answered it. He is a good, honest fellow, and *can* write a friendly letter, which would do equal honour to his head and his heart, as a whole sheaf of his letters which I have by me will witness; and though fame does not blow her trumpet at my approach *now* as she did *then*, when he first honoured me with his friendship, yet I am as proud as ever; and when I am laid in my grave, I wish to be stretched at my full length, that I may occupy every inch of ground I have a right to.

You would laugh were you to see me where I am just now. Would to Heaven you were here to laugh with me, though I am afraid that crying would be our first employment! Here am I set, a solitary hermit, in the solitary room of a solitary inn, with a solitary bottle of wine by me, as grave and as stupid as an owl, but, like that owl, still faithful to my old song; in confirmation of which, my dear Mrs. Mac, here is your good health! May the hand-waived benisons o' Heaven bless your bonnie face; and the wratch wha skellies at your welfare, may the auld tinkler deil get him, to clout his rotten heart! Amen.

You must know, my dearest Madam, that these now many years, wherever I am, in whatever company, when a married lady is called as a toast, I constantly give you; but as your name has never passed my lips,

even to my most intimate friend, I give you by the name of Mrs. Mac. This is so well known among my acquaintances, that when any married lady is called for, the toast-master will say: "Oh, we need not ask him who it is: here's Mrs. Mac!" I have also, among my convivial friends, set on foot a round of toasts, which I call a round of Arcadian Shepherdesses—that is, a round of favourite ladies, under female names celebrated in ancient song; and then you are my Clarinda. So, my lovely Clarinda, I devote this glass of wine to a most ardent wish for your happiness.

In vain would Prudence, with decorous sneer,
Point out a censuring world, and bid me fear:
Above that world on wings of love I rise;
I know its worst, and can that worst despise.

"Wronged, injured, shunned, unpitied, undrest—

The mocked quotation of the scorner's jest"—
Let Prudence' direst bodements on me fall,
Clarinda, rich reward! o'er pays them all.

I have been rhyming a little of late, but I do not know if they are worth postage.

Tell me what you think of the following monody.

["*Only a lady famed for caprice.*"]

The subject of the foregoing is a woman of fashion in this country, with whom at one period I was well acquainted. By some scandalous conduct to me, and two or three other gentlemen here as well as me, she steered so far to the north of my good opinion, that I have made her the theme of several ill-natured things. . . .

R. B.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN BURNS AND GEORGE THOMSON.

In 1792 George Thomson announced the work which was henceforward to associate his name with that of Robert Burns in the memory of his countrymen; he entitled it, "A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs for the Voice: to which are Added Introductory and Concluding Symphonies and Accompaniments for the Piano-forte and Violin, by Pleyel and Koseluck, with Select and Characteristic Verses by the most Admired Scottish Poets." As Burns was the only poet of the period who could worthily assist him in his ambitious undertaking, he was immediately applied to, and he responded to the call with the utmost enthusiasm. The correspondence that ensued has, in consequence of its character and scope, proved of supreme interest to every subsequent student of Scottish Song. Before proceeding to that, however, we shall allow Mr. Thomson to speak for himself as to his own personal history and his connexion with the poet—the latter at one time a subject of fierce discussion. The letter subjoined was addressed to Mr. Robert Chambers, and first appeared in the "Land of Burns":—

"TRUSTEES' OFFICE, EDINBURGH,
March 29, 1838.

"DEAR SIR,

To your request that I should furnish you with a few particulars respecting my personal history, I really know not well what to say, because my life has been too unimportant to merit much notice. It is in connexion with national music and song, and my correspondence on that subject with Burns chiefly, that I can have any reasonable hope of being occasionally

spoken of. I shall therefore content myself with a brief sketch of what belongs to my personal history, and then proceed to the subject of Scottish music and Burns.

"I was born at Limekilns, in Fife, about the year 1759, as I was informed, for I can scarce believe I am so old. My father taught a school there, and having been invited in that capacity to the town of Banff, he carried me thither in my very early years, instructed me in the elementary branches of knowledge, and sent me to learn the dead languages at what was called the grammar school. He had a hard struggle to maintain an increasing family, and, after trying some mercantile means of enlarging his income without success, he moved with his family to Edinburgh when I was about seventeen. In a short time I got into a writer to the signet's office as a clerk, and remained in that capacity with him, and another W.S., till the year 1780, when, through the influence of Mr. John Home, author of 'Douglas,' with one of the members of the Honourable Board of Trustees I was recommended to that Board, and became their junior clerk. Not long after, upon the death of their principal clerk, I succeeded to his situation, Mr. Robert Arbuthnot being then their secretary; under whom, and afterwards under Sir William, his son and successor, I have served the Board for upwards of half a century; enjoying their fullest confidence, and the entire approbation of both secretaries,

whose gentlemanly manners and kind dispositions were such (for I never saw a frown on their brows, nor heard an angry word escape from their lips) that I can say, with heartfelt gratitude to their memory, and to all my superiors, in this the 58th year of my clerkship, that I never have felt the word servitude to mean anything in the least mortifying or unpleasant, but quite the reverse.

"In my twenty-fifth year, I married Miss Miller, whose father was a lieutenant in the 50th Regiment, and her mother the daughter of a most respectable gentleman in Berwickshire, George Peter, Esq., of Chapel, and this was the wisest act of my life. She is happily still living, and has presented me with six daughters and two sons, the elder of the two being now a lieutenant-colonel of Engineers, and the other an assistant-commissary-general.

"From my boyhood I had a passion for the sister arts of music and painting, which I have ever since continued to cherish in the society of the ablest professors of both arts. Having studied the violin, it was my custom, after the hours of business, to con over our Scottish melodies, and to devour the choruses of Handel's oratorios; in which, when performed at St. Cecilia's Hall, I generally took a part, along with a few other gentlemen, Mr. Alexander Wight, one of the most eminent counsel at the bar, Mr. Gilbert Innes of Stow, Mr. John Russel, W.S., Mr. John Hutton, &c.; it being then not uncommon for grave amateurs to assist at the St. Cecilia concerts, one of the most interesting and liberal musical institutions that ever existed in Scotland, or indeed in any country. I had so much delight in singing those matchless choruses, and in practising the violin quartettos of Pleyel

and Haydn, that it was with joy I hailed the hour when, like the young amateur in the good old Scotch song, I could hie me hame to my Cremona, and enjoy Haydn's admirable fancies.

'I still was pleased where'er I went; and when I
was alone,
I screw'd my pegs and pleased myself with John
o' Badenyon.'

"At the St. Cecilia concerts I heard Scottish songs sung in a style of excellence far surpassing any idea which I had previously had of their beauty, and that, too, from Italians, Signor Tenducci the one, and Signora Domenica Corri the other. Tenducci's 'I'll never leave thee,' and 'Braes o' Ballenden,' and the Signora's 'Ewebughts, Marion,' and 'Waly, waly,' so delighted every hearer, that in the most crowded room not a whisper was to be heard, so entirely did they rivet the attention and admiration of the audience. Tenducci's singing was full of passion, feeling, and taste; and, what we hear very rarely from singers, his articulation of the words was no less perfect than his expression of the music. It was in consequence of my hearing him and Signora Corri sing a number of our songs so charmingly, that I conceived the idea of collecting all our best melodies and songs, and of obtaining accompaniments to them worthy of their merit.

"On examining with great attention the various collections on which I could by any means lay my hands, I found them all more or less exceptionable, a sad mixture of good and evil, the pure and the impure. The melodies in general were without any symphonies to introduce and conclude them; and the accompaniments (for the piano only) meagre and commonplace:—while the verses united with the melodies were in a great many instances coarse and vulgar, the productions of a rude

age, and such as could not be tolerated or sung in good society.

"Many copies of the same melody both in print and manuscript, differing more or less from each other, came under my view: and after a minute comparison of copies, and hearing them sung over and over by such of my fair friends as I knew to be most conversant with them, I chose that set or copy of each air which I found the most simple and beautiful.

"For obtaining accompaniments to the airs, and also symphonies to introduce and conclude each air—a most interesting appendage to the airs that had not before graced any of the collections—I turned my eyes first on Pleyel, whose compositions were remarkably popular and pleasing: and afterwards, when I had resolved to extend my work into a complete collection of all the airs that were worthy of preservation, I divided them into different portions, and sent them from time to time to Haydn, to Beethoven, to Weber, Hummell, &c., the greatest musicians then flourishing in Europe. These artists, to my inexpressible satisfaction, proceeded *con amore* with their respective portions of the work, and in the symphonies, which are original and characteristic creations of their own, as well as in their judicious and delicate accompaniments for the pianoforte, and for the violin, flute, and violoncello, they exceeded my most sanguine expectations, and obtained the decided approval of the best judges. Their compositions have been pronounced by the *Edinburgh Review* to be wholly unrivalled for originality and beauty.

"The poetry became next the subject of my anxious consideration, and engaged me in a far more extensive correspondence than I had ever anticipated, which

occupied nearly the whole of my leisure for many years. For, although a small portion of the melodies had long been united with excellent songs, yet a much greater number stood matched with such unworthy associates as to render a divorce and a new union absolutely necessary.

"Fortunately for the melodies, I turned my eyes towards Robert Burns, who no sooner was informed of my plan and wishes, than, with all the frankness, generosity, and enthusiasm which marked his character, he undertook to write whatever songs I wanted for my work; but in answer to my promise of remuneration, he declared, in the most emphatic terms, that he would receive nothing of the kind. He proceeded with the utmost alacrity to execute what he had undertaken, and from the year 1792 till the time of his death in 1796, I continued to receive his exquisitely beautiful compositions for the melodies I had sent him from time to time: and, in order that nothing should be wanting which might suit my work, he empowered me to make use of all the other songs that he had written for Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*, &c. My work thus contains above one hundred and twenty of his inimitable songs; besides many of uncommon beauty that I had obtained from Thomas Campbell, Professor Smyth, Sir Walter Scott, Joanna Baillie, and other admired poets: together with the best songs of the olden time.

"Upon my publishing the first twenty-five melodies with Pleyel's symphonies and accompaniments, and songs by different authors, six of Burns's songs being of the number (and those six were all I published in his lifetime), I, of course, sent a copy of this half volume to the poet; and as a mark of my gratitude for his excessive

kindness, I ventured, with all possible delicacy, to send him a small pecuniary present, notwithstanding what he had said on the subject. He retained it after much hesitation, but wrote me (Letter XXIV.) that, if I presumed to repeat it, he would, on the least motion of it, indignantly spurn what was past, and commence entire stranger to me.

"Who that reads the letter above referred to, and the first one which the poet sent me, can think I have deserved the abuse which anonymous scribblers have poured upon me for not endeavouring to remunerate the poet? If I had dared to go further than I did, in sending him money, is it not perfectly clear that he would have deemed it an insult, and ceased to write another song for me?

"Had I been a selfish or avaricious man, I had a fair opportunity, upon the death of the poet, to put money in my pocket; for I might then have published, for my own behoof, all the beautiful lyrics he had written for me, the original manuscripts of which were in my possession. But instead of doing this, I was no sooner informed that the friends of the poet's family had come to a resolution to collect his works, and to publish them for the benefit of the family, and that they thought it of importance to include my MSS., as being likely, from their number, their novelty, and beauty, to prove an attraction to subscribers, than I felt it at once my duty to put them in possession of all the songs and of the correspondence between the poet and myself, and accordingly, through Mr. John Syme of Ryedale, I transmitted the whole to Dr. Currie, who had been prevailed on, immensely for the advantage of Mrs. Burns and her children, to take on himself the task of editor.

"For thus surrendering the

manuscripts, I received both verbally and in writing, the warm thanks of the trustees for the family, Mr. John Syme and Mr. Gilbert Burns; who considered what I had done as a fair return for the poet's generosity of conduct to me.

"If anything more were wanting to set me right, with respect to the anonymous calumnies circulated to my prejudice in regard to the poet, I have it in my power to refer to a most respectable testimonial which, to my very agreeable surprise, was sent me by Professor Josiah Walker, one of the poet's biographers: and, had I not been reluctant to obtrude myself on the public, I should long since have given it publicity. The professor wrote me as follows:—

"PERTH, *April* 14, 1811.

"DEAR SIR,

Before I left Edinburgh, I sent a copy of my account of Burns to Lord Woodhouselee; and since my return I have had a letter from his lordship, which among other passages, contains one that I cannot withhold from you! He writes thus:—"I am glad that you have embraced the occasion which lay in your way of doing full justice to Mr. George Thomson, who, I agree with you in thinking, was most harshly and illiberally treated by an anonymous dull calumniator. I have always regarded Mr. Thomson as a man of great worth and most respectable character: and I have every reason to believe that poor Burns felt himself as much indebted to his good counsels and active friendship as a man, as the public is sensible he was to his good taste and judgment as a critic!"

"Of the unbiassed opinion of such a highly respectable gentleman and accomplished scholar as Lord Woodhouselee, I certainly feel not a little proud: it is of itself more than sufficient to silence the calumnies

by which I have been assailed, first, anonymously, and afterwards, to my great surprise, by some writers who might have been expected to possess sufficient judgment to see the matter in its true light.

"G. T."

[*"To this letter of my excellent friend Mr. Thomson," says Chambers, "little can be added. His work, the labour of his life, has long been held the crown of glory of Scottish melody and song, and is universally known. His own character, in the only where he has spent so many years, has ever stood high. It was scarcely necessary that Mr. Thomson should enter into a defence of himself against the inconsiderate charges which have been brought against him.*

"When Burns refused remuneration from one whom he knew to be, like himself, of the generation of Apollo, rather than of Plutus, and whose musical friend was only entering upon a task, the results of which no one could tell, how can Mr. Thomson be fairly blamed?"

"If a moderate success ultimately crowned his enterprise and toil—and the success has probably been much more moderate than Mr. Thomson's assailants suppose—long after the poor bard was beyond the reach of money, and all superior consolations, who can envy it, or who can say that it offers any offence to the names of the unhappy poet? The charge was indeed never preferred but in ignorance, and would be totally unworthy of notice, if ignorant parties were not still apt to be imposed upon by it."]

I.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, September 1792.

SIR,

For some years past I have, with a friend or two, employed many leisure hours in selecting and collating the most favourite of our national melodies for publication. We have engaged Pleyel, the most

agreeable composer living, to put accompaniments to these, and also to compose an instrumental prelude and conclusion to each air, the better to fit them for concerts, both public and private. To render this work perfect we are desirous to have the poetry improved wherever it seems unworthy of the music; and that it is so in many instances is allowed by every one conversant with our musical collections. The editors of these seem in general to have depended on the music proving an excuse for the verses; and hence some charming melodies are united to mere nonsense and doggerel, while others are accommodated with rhymes so loose and indelicate as cannot be sung in decent company. To remove this reproach would be an easy task to the author of the "Cotter's Saturday Night;" and, for the honour of Caledonia, I would fain hope he may be induced to take up the pen. If so, we shall be enabled to present the public with a collection infinitely more interesting than any that has yet appeared, and acceptable to all persons of taste, whether they wish for correct melodies, delicate accompaniments, or characteristic verses. — We will esteem your poetical assistance a particular favour, besides paying any reasonable price you shall please to demand for it.—Profit is quite a secondary consideration with us, and we are resolved to spare neither pains nor expense on the publication. Tell me frankly, then, whether you will devote your leisure to writing twenty or twenty-five songs, suited to the particular melodies which I am prepared to send you. A few songs, exceptionable only in some of their verses, I will likewise submit to your consideration; leaving it to you either to mend these, or make new songs in their stead. It is superfluous to assure you that I have no intention

to displace any of the sterling old songs; those only will be removed which appear quite silly, or absolutely indecent. Even these shall be all examined by Mr. Burns, and, if he is of opinion that any of them are deserving of the music, in such cases no divorce shall take place.

Relying on the letter accompanying this, to be forgiven for the liberty I have taken in addressing you, I am, with great esteem, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

G. THOMSON.

II.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

DUMFRIES, 16th Sept. 1792.

SIR,

I have just this moment got your letter. As the request you make to me will positively add to my enjoyments in complying with it, I shall enter into your undertaking with all the small portion of abilities I have, strained to their utmost exertion by the impulse of enthusiasm.—Only, don't hurry me: "Deil tak the hindmost" is by no means the *cri de guerre* of my muse. Will you, as I am inferior to none of you in enthusiastic attachment to the poetry and music of old Caledonia, and, since you request it, have cheerfully promised my mite of assistance—will you let me have a list of your airs with the first line of the printed verses you intend for them, that I may have an opportunity of suggesting any alteration that may occur to me? You know 'tis in the way of my trade; still leaving you, gentlemen, the undoubted right of publishers to approve or reject at your pleasure for your own publication.—Apropos! if you are for English verses, there is, on my part, an end of the matter. Whether in the simplicity of the ballad or the pathos of the song, I can only hope to please myself in being allowed at least a sprinkling of

our native tongue. English verses, particularly the works of Scotsmen, that have merit, are certainly very eligible. "Tweedside!"—"Ah! the poor shepherd's mournful fate!"—"Ah! Chloris, could I now but sit," &c., you cannot mend; but such insipid stuff as "To Fanny fair could I impart," &c., usually set to "The Mill, Mill, O!" is a disgrace to the collections in which it has already appeared, and would doubly disgrace a collection that will have the very superior merit of yours. But more of this in the further prosecution of the business, if I am called on for my strictures and amendments—I say amendments; for I will not alter except where I myself at least think that I amend.

As to any remuneration, you may think my songs either above or below price; for they shall absolutely be the one or the other. In the honest enthusiasm with which I embark in your undertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, &c., would be downright sodomy of soul! A proof of each of the songs that I compose or amend, I shall receive as a favour. In the rustic phrase of the season, "Gude speed the wark!"—I am, Sir, your very humble servant,

R. BURNS.

P.S.—I have some particular reasons for wishing my interference to be known as little as possible.

III.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 13th Oct. 1792.

DEAR SIR,

I received with much satisfaction your pleasant and obliging letter, and I return my warmest acknowledgments for the enthusiasm with which you have entered into our undertaking. We have now no doubt of being able to produce a collection

highly deserving of public attention in all respects.

I agree with you in thinking English verses that have merit very eligible wherever new verses are necessary; because the English becomes every year more and more the language of Scotland; but if you mean that no English verses except those by Scottish authors ought to be admitted, I am half inclined to differ from you. I should consider it unpardonable to sacrifice one good song in the Scottish dialect, to make room for English verses; but if we can select a few excellent ones suited to the unprovided or ill-provided airs, would it not be the very bigotry of literary patriotism to reject such merely because the authors were born south of the Tweed? Our sweet air, "My Nannie, O," which in the collections is joined to the poorest stuff that Allan Ramsay ever wrote, beginning, "While some for pleasure pawn their health," answers so finely to Dr. Percy's beautiful song, "O Nancy, wilt thou go with me?" that one would think he wrote it on purpose for the air. However, it is not at all our wish to confine you to English verses: you shall freely be allowed a sprinkling of your native tongue, as you elegantly express it; and moreover we will patiently await your own time. One thing only I beg, which is, that however gay and sportive the muse may be, she may always be decent. Let her not write what beauty would blush to speak, nor wound that charming delicacy which forms the most precious dowry of our daughters. I do not conceive the song to be the most proper vehicle for witty and brilliant conceits: simplicity, I believe, should be its prominent feature; but in some of our songs the writers have confounded simplicity with coarseness and vulgarity; although between the one and the other, as Dr. Beattie well observes, there is as great a difference as between a plain

suit of clothes and a bundle of rags. The humorous ballad, or pathetic complaint, is best suited to our artless melodies; and more interesting, indeed, in all songs, than the most pointed wit, dazzling descriptions, and flowery fancies.

With these trite observations, I send you eleven of the songs for which it is my wish to substitute others of your writing. I shall soon transmit the rest, and at the same time a prospectus of the whole collection; and you may believe we will receive any hints that you are so kind as to give for improving the work with the greatest pleasure and thankfulness. —I remain, dear Sir, &c.,

G. THOMSON.

IV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

DUMFRIES, 26th Oct. 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,

Let me tell you that you are too fastidious in your ideas of songs and ballads. I own that your criticisms are just; the songs you specify in your list have, all but one, the faults you remark in them; but who shall mend the matter? Who shall rise up and say—Go to, I will make a better? For instance, on reading over "The Lea-Rig," I immediately set about trying my hand on it, and, after all, I could make nothing more of it than the following, which, Heaven knows, is poor enough:—
[See "My ain kind dearie, O."]

Your observation as to the aptitude of Dr. Percy's ballad to the air, "Nannie, O," is just. It is besides, perhaps, the most beautiful ballad in the English language. But let me remark to you, that in the sentiment and style of our Scottish airs there is a pastoral simplicity, a something that one may call the Doric style and dialect of vocal music, to which a dash of our native tongue and manners is

particularly, nay, peculiarly, apposite. For this reason, and, upon my honour, for this reason alone, I am of opinion (but, as I told you before, my opinion is yours, freely yours, to approve or reject, as you please) that my ballad of "Nannie, O!" might perhaps do for one set of verses to the tune. Now don't let it enter into your head that you are under any necessity of taking my verses. I have long ago made up my mind as to my own reputation in the business of authorship; and have nothing to be pleased or offended at in your adoption or rejection of my verses. Though you should reject one half of what I give you, I shall be pleased with your adopting the other half, and shall continue to serve you with the same assiduity.

In the printed copy of my "Nannie, O!" the name of the river is horribly prosaic. I will alter it—

"Behind yon hills where Lugar flows."

Girvan is the name of the river that suits the idea of the stanza best, but Lugar is the most agreeable modulation of syllables.

I will soon give you a great many more remarks on this business; but I have just now an opportunity of conveying you this scrawl, free of postage, an expense that it is ill able to pay: so, with my best compliments to honest Allan, Gude be wi' ye, &c.,

R. B.

Saturday morning.

As I find I have still an hour to spare this morning before my conveyance goes away, I will give you "Nannie, O!" at length.

Your remarks on "Ewe-bughts, Marion," are just: still it has obtained a place among our more classical Scottish songs; and, what with many beauties in its composition, and more prejudices in its favour, you will not find it easy to supplant it.

In my very early years, when I was

thinking of going to the West Indies, I took the following farewell of a dear girl. [See "Will you go to the Indies, my Mary?"] It is quite trifling, and has nothing of the merits of "Ewe-bughts;" but it will fill up this page. You must know that all my earlier love-songs were the breathings of ardent passion, and though it might have been easy in aftertimes to have given them a polish, yet that polish, to me, whose they were, and who perhaps alone cared for them, would have defaced the legend of my heart, which was so faithfully inscribed on them. Their uncouth simplicity was, as they say of wines, their race.

"Gala Water," and "Auld Rob Morris," I think, will most probably be the next subject of my musings. However, even on my verses, speak out your criticisms with equal frankness. My wish is, not to stand aloof, the uncomplaining bigot of *opiniâtreté*, but cordially to join issue with you in the furtherance of the work.

R. B.

V.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

DUMFRIES, Nov. 8, 1792.

If you mean, my dear sir, that all the songs in your collection shall be poetry of the first merit, I am afraid you will find more difficulty in the undertaking than you are aware of. There is a peculiar rhythmus in many of our airs, and a necessity for adapting syllables to the emphasis, or what I would call the feature-notes of the tune, that cramp the poet, and lay him under almost insuperable difficulties. For instance, in the air, "My wife's a wanton wee thing," if a few lines smooth and pretty can be adapted to it, it is all you can expect. The following ["My wife's a winsome wee thing,"] were made extempore to it; and though, on further study, I might give you something more profound, yet it might not suit the

light-horse gallop of the air so well as this random clink.

I have just been looking over the "Collier's Bonny Dochter;" and if the following rhapsody, which I composed the other day, on a charming Ayrshire girl, Miss Lesley Baillie, as she passed through this place to England, will suit your taste better than the "Collier; Lassie"—fall on and welcome :—[See "Bonnie Lesley."]

I have hitherto deferred the sublimer, more pathetic airs, until more leisure, as they will take, and deserve, a greater effort. However, they are all put into your hands, as clay into the hands of the potter, to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour.—Farewell, R. B.

VI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Nov. 14, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,

I agree with you that the song, "Katherine Ogie," is very poor stuff, and unworthy, altogether unworthy, of so beautiful an air. I tried to mend it; but the awkward sound, Ogie, recurring so often in the rhyme, spoils every attempt at introducing sentiment into the piece. The foregoing song ["Highland Mary"] pleases myself; I think it is in my happiest manner: you will see at first glance that it suits the air. The subject of the song is one of the most interesting passages of my youthful days; and I own that I should be much flattered to see the verses set to an air which would insure celebrity. Perhaps, after all, 'tis the still glowing prejudice of my heart that throws a borrowed lustre over the merits of the composition.

I have partly taken your idea of "Auld Rob Morris." I have adopted the first two verses, and am going on with the song on a new plan,

which promises pretty well. I take up one or another, just as the bee of the moment buzzes in my bonnet-lug; and do you, *sans ceremonie*, make what use you choose of the productions.—Adieu, R. B.

VII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, Nov. 1792.

DEAR SIR,

I was just going to write to you, that on meeting with your "Nannie," I had fallen violently in love with her. I thank you, therefore, for sending the charming rustic to me in the dress you wish her to appear before the public. She does you great credit, and will soon be admitted into the best company.

I regret that your song for the "Lea-Rig" is so short; the air is easy, soon sung, and very pleasing: so that, if the singer stops at the end of two stanzas, it is a pleasure lost ere it is well possessed.

Although a dash of our native tongue and manners is doubtless peculiarly congenial and appropriate in our melodies, yet I shall be able to present a considerable number of the very Flowers of English Song, well adapted to these melodies, which, in England at least, will be the means of recommending them to still greater attention than they have procured there. But, you will observe, my plan is, that every air shall in the first place have verses wholly by Scottish poets; and that those of English writers shall follow as additional songs, for the choice of the singer.

What you say of the "Ewe-buhts" is just; I admire it, and never meant to supplant it.—All I requested was, that you would try your hand on some of the inferior stanzas, which are apparently no part of the original song; but this

I do not urge, because the song is of sufficient length, though those inferior stanzas be omitted, as they will be by the singer of taste. You must not think I expect all the songs to be of superlative merit: that were an unreasonable expectation. I am sensible that no poet can sit down doggedly to pen verses, and succeed well, at all times.

I am highly pleased with your humorous and amorous rhapsody on "Bonnie Lesley;" it is a thousand times better than the "Collier's Lassie." "The deil he cou'd na scaith thee," &c., is an eccentric and happy thought. Do you not think, however, that the names of such old heroes as Alexander sound rather queer, unless in pompous or mere burlesque verse? Instead of the line, "And never made anither," I would humbly suggest, "And ne'er made sic anither," and I would fain have you substitute some other line for "Return to Caledonie," in the last verse, because I think this alteration of the orthography, and of the sound of Caledonia, disfigures the word, and renders it Hudibrastic.

Of the other song—"My wife's a winsome wee thing," I think the first eight lines very good: but I do not admire the other eight, because four of them are a bare repetition of the first verse. I have been trying to spin a stanza, but could make nothing better than the following: do you mend it, or, as Yorick did with the love-letter, whip it up in your own way:—

O leeze me on my wee thing,
My bonnie blithesome wee thing;
Sae lang's I hae my wee thing,
I'll think my lot divine.

Though world's care we share o't,
And may see meikle mair o't,
Wi' her I'll blithely bear it,
And ne'er a word repine.

You perceive, my dear Sir, I avail myself of the liberty, which you condescend to allow me, by speaking

freely what I think. Be assured, it is not my disposition to pick out the faults of any poem or picture I see: my first and chief object is to discover and be delighted with the beauties of the piece. If I sit down to examine critically, and at leisure, what, perhaps, you have written in haste, I may happen to observe careless lines, the re-perusal of which might lead you to improve them. The wren will often see what has been overlooked by the eagle.—I remain, yours faithfully, &c.,

G. T.

P.S.—Your verses upon "Highland Mary" are just come to hand; they breathe the genuine spirit of poetry, and, like the music, will last for ever. Such verses, united to such an air, with the delicate harmony of Pleyel superadded, might form a treat worthy of being presented to Apollo himself. I have heard the sad story of your Mary: you always seem inspired when you write of her.

G. T.

VIII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

DUMFRIES, Dec. 1, 1792.

YOUR alterations of my "Nannie, O!" are perfectly right. So are those of "My wife's a winsome wee thing." Your alteration of the second stanza is a positive improvement. Now, my dear sir, with the freedom which characterises our correspondence, I must not, cannot, alter "Bonnie Lesley." You are right, the word "Alexander" makes the line a little uncouth, but I think the thought is pretty. Of Alexander, beyond all other heroes, it may be said, in the sublime language of Scripture, that "he went forth conquering and to conquer."

"For nature made her what she is,
And never made anither."
(Such a person as she is.)

This is, in my opinion, more

poetical than "ne'er made sic anither." However, it is immaterial: make it either way. "Caledonie," I agree with you, is not so good a word as could be wished, though it is sanctioned in three or four instances by Allan Ramsay; but I cannot help it. In short, that species of stanza is the most difficult that I have ever tried.

The "Lea-Rig" is as follows.—[Here the poet repeats the first two stanzas, and adds an additional one.]

I am interrupted.—Yours, &c.,
R. B.

IX.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

December 4, 1792.

THE foregoing ["Auld Rob Morris" and "Duncan Gray"] I submit, my dear sir, to your better judgment. Acquit them, or condemn them, as seemeth good in your sight. "Duncan Gray" is that kind of light-horse gallop of an air which precludes sentiment. The ludicrous is its ruling feature.—Yours,

R. B.

X.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Jan. 1793.

MANY returns of the season to you, my dear sir. How comes on your publication? will these two foregoing ["O poortith cauld, and restless love" and "Gala Water"] be of any service to you? I should like to know what songs you print to each tune, besides the verses to which it is set. In short, I would wish to give you my opinion on all the poetry you publish. You know it is my trade, and a man in the way of his trade may suggest useful hints that escape men of much superior parts and endowments in other things.

If you meet with my dear and much-valued Cunningham, greet him, in my name, with the compliments of the season.—Yours, &c.,
R. B.

XI.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, Jan. 20, 1793.

You make me happy, my dear sir, and thousands will be happy to see the charming songs you have sent me. Many merry returns of the season to you, and may you long continue, among the sons and daughters of Caledonia, to delight them and to honour yourself.

The last four songs with which you favoured me, viz., "Auld Rob Morris," "Duncan Gray," "Gala Water," and "Cauld Kail," are admirable. Duncan is indeed a lad of grace, and his humour will endear him to everybody.

The distracted lover in "Auld Rob," and the happy shepherdess in "Gala Water," exhibit an excellent contrast: they speak from genuine feeling, and powerfully touch the heart.

The number of songs which I had originally in view was limited; but I now resolve to include every Scotch air and song worth singing; leaving none behind but mere gleanings, to which the publishers of *omnium-gatherum* are welcome. I would rather be the editor of a collection from which nothing could be taken away, than of one to which nothing could be added. We intend presenting the subscribers with two beautiful stroke engravings; the one characteristic of the plaintive, and the other of the lively, songs; and I have Dr. Beattie's promise of an essay upon the subject of our national music, if his health will permit him to write it. As a number of our songs have doubtless been called forth by particular

events, or by the charms of peerless damsels, there must be many curious anecdotes relating to them.

The late Mr. Tytler of Woodhouselee, I believe, knew more of this than anybody; for he joined to the pursuits of an antiquary a taste for poetry, besides being a man of the world, and possessing an enthusiasm for music beyond most of his contemporaries. He was quite pleased with this plan of mine, for I may say it has been solely managed by me, and we had several long conversations about it when it was in embryo. If I could simply mention the name of the heroine of each song, and the incident which occasioned the verses, it would be gratifying. Pray, will you send me any information of this sort, as well with regard to your own songs, as the old ones?

To all the favourite songs of the plaintive or pastoral kind, will be joined the delicate accompaniments, &c., of Pleyel. To those of the comic and humorous class, I think accompaniments scarcely necessary; they are chiefly fitted for the conviviality of the festive board, and a tuneful voice, with a proper delivery of the words, renders them perfect. Nevertheless, to these I propose adding bass accompaniments, because then they are fitted either for singing, or for instrumental performance, when there happens to be no singer. I mean to employ our right trusty friend Mr. Clarke, to set the bass to these, which he assures me he will do *con amore*, and with much greater attention than he ever bestowed on anything of the kind. But for this last class of airs I will not attempt to find more than one set of verses.

That eccentric bard, Peter Pindar, has started I know not how many difficulties about writing for the airs I sent to him, because of the peculiarity of their measure, and the trammels they impose on his

flying Pegasus. I subjoin for your perusal the only one I have yet got from him, being for the fine air "Lord Gregory." The Scots verses, printed with that air, are taken from the middle of an old ballad, called "The Lass of Lochroyan," which I do not admire. I have set down the air, therefore, as a creditor of yours. Many of the Jacobite songs are replete with wit and humour: might not the best of these be included in our volume of comic songs?

POSTSCRIPT.

FROM THE HON. A. ERSKINE.

MR. THOMSON has been so obliging as to give me a perusal of your songs. "Highland Mary" is most enchantingly pathetic, and "Duncan Gray" possesses native genuine humour: "Spak o' lowpin o'er a linn," is a line of itself that should make you immortal. I sometimes hear of you from our mutual friend Cunningham, who is a most excellent fellow, and possesses, above all men I know, the charm of a most obliging disposition. You kindly promised me, about a year ago, a collection of your unpublished productions, religious and amorous; I know from experience how irksome it is to copy. If you will get any trusty person in Dumfries to write them over fair, I will give Peter Hill whatever money he asks for his trouble, and I certainly shall not betray your confidence.—I am your hearty admirer,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

XII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Jan. 26, 1793.

I APPROVE greatly, my dear sir, of your plans. Dr. Beattie's essay will of itself be a treasure. On my part, I mean to draw up an appendix to

the Doctor's essay, containing my stock of anecdotes, &c., of our Scots songs. All the late Mr. Tytler's anecdotes I have by me, taken down in the course of my acquaintance with him, from his own mouth. I am such an enthusiast that, in the course of my several peregrinations through Scotland, I made a pilgrimage to the individual spot from which every song took its rise. "Lochaber" and the "Braes of Ballenden" excepted. So far as the locality, either from the title of the air, or the tenor of the song, could be ascertained, I have paid my devotions at the particular shrine of every Scots muse.

I do not doubt but you might make a very valuable collection of Jacobite songs; but would it give no offence? In the meantime, do not you think that some of them, particularly "The sow's tail to Geordie," as an air, with other words, might be well worth a place in your collection of lively songs?

If it were possible to procure songs of merit, it would be proper to have one set of Scots words to every air, and that the set of words to which the notes ought to be set. There is a *naïveté*, a pastoral simplicity, in a slight intermixture of Scots words and phraseology, which is more in unison (at least to my taste, and, I will add, to every genuine Caledonian taste) with the simple pathos, or rustic sprightliness of our native music, than any English verses whatever.

The very name of Peter Pindar is an acquisition to your work. His "Gregory" is beautiful. I have tried to give you a set of stanzas in Scots, on the same subject, which are at your service. [See the ballad of "Lord Gregory."] Not that I intend to enter the lists with Peter; that would be presumption indeed. My song, though much inferior in poetic merit, has, I think, more of the ballad simplicity in it.

My most respectful compliments

to the honourable gentleman who favoured me with a postscript in your last. He shall hear from me and receive his MSS. soon.

R. B.

XIII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

March 20, 1793.

MY DEAR SIR,

The song prefixed ["Mary Morison"] is one of my juvenile works. I leave it in your hands. I do not think it very remarkable, either for its merits or demerits. It is impossible (at least I feel it so in my stunted powers) to be always original, entertaining, and witty.

What is become of the list, &c., of your songs? I shall be out of all temper with you by and by. I have always looked on myself as the prince of indolent correspondents, and valued myself accordingly; and I will not, cannot bear rivalry from you, nor anybody else.

R. B.

XIV.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, April 2, 1793.

I WILL not recognise the title you give yourself, "the prince of *indolent* correspondents;" but if the adjective were taken away, I think the title would then fit you exactly. It gives me pleasure to find you can furnish anecdotes with respect to most of the songs: these will be a literary curiosity.

I now send you my list of the songs, which I believe will be found nearly complete. I have put down the first lines of all the English songs which I propose giving in addition to the Scotch verses. If any others occur to you, better adapted to the character of the airs, pray mention them, when you favour me with your strictures upon everything else relating to the work.

Pleyel has lately sent me a number of the songs, with his symphonies and accompaniments added to them. I wish you were here, that I might serve up some of them to you with your own verses, by way of dessert after dinner. There is so much delightful fancy in the symphonies, and such a delicate simplicity in the accompaniments—they are, indeed, beyond all praise.

I am very much pleased with the several last productions of your muse: your "Lord Gregory," in my estimation, is more interesting than Peter's, beautiful as his is. Your "Here awa, Willie," must undergo some alterations to suit the air. Mr. Erskine and I have been conning it over: he will suggest what is necessary to make them a fit match. The gentleman I have mentioned, whose fine taste you are no stranger to, is so well pleased, both with the musical and poetical part of our work, that he has volunteered his assistance, and has already written four songs for it, which, by his own desire, I send for your perusal.

G. T.

XV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

April 7, 1793.

THANK you, my dear sir, for your packet. You cannot imagine how much this business of composing for your publication has added to my enjoyments. What with my early attachment to ballads, your book, &c., ballad-making is now as completely my hobbyhorse as ever fortification was Uncle Toby's; so I'll e'en canter it away till I come to the limit of my race, (God grant that I may take the right side of the winning post!), and then, cheerfully looking back on the honest folks with whom I have been happy, I shall say, or sing, "Sae merry as we a' ha'e been," and, raising my last looks to the

whole human race, the last words of the voice of Coila shall be "Good-night, and joy be wi' you a'!" So much for my last words: now for a few present remarks, as they have occurred at random on looking over your list.

The first lines of "The last time I came o'er the moor," and several other lines in it, are beautiful; but in my opinion—pardon me, revered shade of Ramsay! the song is unworthy of the divine air. I shall try to make or mend. "For ever, Fortune, wilt thou prove," is a charming song; but "Logan Burn and Logan Braes" are sweetly susceptible of rural imagery: I'll try that likewise, and, if I succeed, the other song may class among the English ones. I remember the two last lines of a verse in some of the old songs of "Logan Water" (for I know a good many different ones) which I think pretty:—

"Now my dear lad maun face his face,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes."

"My Patie is a lover gay" is unequal. "His mind is never muddy," is a muddy expression indeed.

"Then I'll resign and marry Pate,
And syne my cockernony!"

This is surely far unworthy of Ramsay, or your book. My song, "Rigs of Barley," to the same tune, does not altogether please me; but if I can mend it and thrash a few loose sentiments out of it, I will submit it to your consideration. I need not here repeat that I leave you, without the smallest partiality or restraint, to reject or approve anything of mine. "The Lass o' Patie's Mill" is one of Ramsay's best songs; but there is one loose sentiment in it, which my much-valued friend, Mr. Erskine, will take into his critical consideration. In Sir J. Sinclair's Statistical volumes are two claims; one, I think, from Aberdeenshire, and the other from Ayrshire, for the

honour of this song. The following anecdote, which I had from the present Sir William Cunningham of Robertland, who had it of the late John, Earl of Loudon, I can, on such authorities, believe:—

Allan Ramsay was residing at Loudon Castle with the then Earl, father to Earl John; and one forenoon, riding or walking out together, his lordship and Allan passed a sweet, romantic spot on Irvine Water, still called "Patie's Mill," where a bonnie lass was "tedding hay, bare-headed, on the green." My lord observed to Allan that it would be a fine theme for a song. Ramsay took the hint, and lingering behind, he composed the first sketch of it, which he produced at dinner.

"The yellow-haired Laddie" deserves the best verses that were ever composed, but I dare not venture on it. The verses you intend, though good, are not quite worthy of it.

"I wish I were where Helen lies." The only tolerable set of this song that I know is in Pinkerton's collection.

"One day I heard Mary say," is a fine song; but, for consistency's sake, alter the name "Adonis." Were there ever such banns published as a purpose of marriage between Adonis and Mary? I agree with you that my song, "There's nought but care on every hand," is much superior to "Poortith cauld." The original song, "The Mill, Mill, O," though excellent, is, on account of delicacy, inadmissible; still I like the title, and think a Scottish song would suit the notes best; and let your chosen song, which is very pretty, follow, as an English set. Though I give Johnson one edition of my songs, that does not give away the copyright. So you may take "Thou lingering star, with less'ning ray," to the tune of *Hughie Graham*, or other songs of mine. "The banks of the Dee" is, you know, literally,

"Langolee," to slow time. The song is well enough, but has some false imagery in it; for instance,

"And sweetly the nightingale sung from the tree."

In the first place, the nightingale sings in a low bush, but never from a tree; and in the second place, there never was a nightingale seen, or heard, on the banks of the Dee, or on the banks of any other river in Scotland. Exotic rural imagery is always comparatively flat. If I could hit on another stanza, equal to "The small birds rejoice," &c. I do myself honestly avow that I think it a superior song. "John Anderson, my Jo." The song to this tune in Johnson's *Museum* is my composition, and I think it not my worst: if it suit you, take it and welcome. Your collection of sentimental and pathetic songs is, in my opinion, very complete; but not so your comic ones. Where are "Tullochgorum," "Lumps o' puddin'," "Tibbie Fowler," and several others, which, in my humble judgment, are well worthy of preservation? There is also one sentimental song of mine in the *Museum*, which never was known out of the immediate neighbourhood, until I got it taken down from a country girl's singing. It is called "Craigieburn Wood;" and in the opinion of Mr. Clarke, is one of the sweetest Scottish songs. He is quite an enthusiast about it; and I would take his taste in Scottish music against the taste of most connoisseurs.

You are quite right in inserting the last five in your list, though they are certainly Irish. "Shepherds, I have lost my love!" is to me a heavenly air—what would you think of a set of Scottish verses to it? I have made one to it a good while ago, but in its original state it is not quite a lady's song. I enclose an altered, not amended, copy for you, if you choose to set the tune to it, and let the Irish verses follow.

Mr. Erskine's songs are all pretty, but his "Lone Vale" is divine.—Yours, &c., R. B.

Let me know just how you like these random hints.

XVI.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *April 1793.*

I REJOICE to find, my dear sir, that ballad-making continues to be your hobbyhorse.—Great pity 'twould be were it otherwise. I hope you will amble it away for many a year, and "witch the world with your horsemanship."

I know there are a good many lively songs of merit that I have not put down in the list sent you; but I have them all in my eye.—"My Patie is a lover gay," though a little unequal, is a natural and very pleasing song, and I humbly think we ought not to displace or alter it, except the last stanza.

G. T.

XVII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

April 1793.

I HAVE yours, my dear sir, this moment. I shall answer it and your former letter in my desultory way of saying whatever comes uppermost. . . .

That business of many of our tunes wanting, at the beginning, what fiddlers call a starting-note, is often a rub to us poor rhymers.

"There's braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
That wander through the blooming heather,"

you may alter to

"Braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
Ye wander," &c.

My song, "Here awa, there awa," as amended by Mr. Erskine, I entirely approve of, and return you. . . .

Give me leave to criticise your taste in the only thing in which it is, in my opinion, reprehensible. You know I ought to know something of my own trade. Of pathos, sentiment, and point, you are a complete judge; but there is a quality more necessary than either in a song, and which is the very essence of a ballad; I mean simplicity: now, if I mistake not, this last feature you are a little apt to sacrifice to the foregoing.

Ramsay, as every other poet, has not been always equally happy in his pieces: still I cannot approve of taking such liberties with an author as Mr. Walker proposes doing with "The last time I came o'er the moor." Let a poet, if he chooses, take up the idea of another, and work it into a piece of his own; but to mangle the works of the poor bard, whose tuneful tongue is now mute for ever, in the dark and narrow house—by Heaven, 'twould be sacrilege! I grant that Mr. W.'s version is an improvement; but I know Mr. W. well, and esteem him much; let him mend the song as the Highlander mended his gun: he gave it a new stock, a new lock, and a new barrel.

I do not, by this, object to leaving out improper stanzas, where that can be done without spoiling the whole. One stanza in "The Lass o' Patie's Mill" must be left out: the song will be nothing worse for it. I am not sure if we can take the same liberty with "Corn rigs are bonie." Perhaps it might want the last stanza, and be the better for it. . . . "Cauld Kail in Aberdeen" you must leave with me yet a while. I have vowed to have a song to that air, on the lady whom I attempted to celebrate in the verses, "Poorthith cauld, and restless love." At any rate, my other song, "Green grow the Rashes," will never suit. That song is current in Scotland under

the old title, and to the merry old tune of that name; which, of course, would mar the progress of your song to celebrity. Your book will be the standard of Scots songs for the future: let this idea ever keep your judgment on the alarm.

I send a song on a celebrated toast in this country, to suit "Bonie Dundee." I send you also a ballad to the "Mill, Mill, O."

"The last time I came o'er the moor" I would fain attempt to make a Scots song for, and let Ramsay's be the English set. You shall hear from me soon. When you go to London on this business, can you come by Dumfries? I have still several MS. Scots airs by me, which I have picked up, mostly from the singing of country lasses. They please me vastly; but your learned lugs would perhaps be displeased with the very feature for which I like them. I call them simple; you would pronounce them silly. Do you know a fine air, called "Jackie Hume's Lament?" I have a song of considerable merit to that air. I'll enclose you both the song and tune, as I had them ready to send to Johnson's *Museum*. I send you likewise, to me, a beautiful little air, which I had taken down from *viva voce*.—Adieu! R. B.

XVIII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

April 1793.

MY DEAR SIR,

I had scarcely put my last letter into the post-office, when I took up the subject of "The last time I came o'er the moor," and ere I slept drew the outlines of the foregoing. How far I have succeeded, I leave on this, as on every other, occasion, to you to decide. I own my vanity is flattered when you give my songs a place in your

elegant and superb work; but to be of service to the work is my first wish. As I have often told you, I do not in a single instance wish you, out of compliment to me, to insert anything of mine. One hint let me give you—whatever Mr. Playel does, let him not alter one iota of the original Scottish airs; I mean in the song department; but let our national music preserve its native features. They are, I own, frequently wild and irreducible to the more modern rules; but on that very eccentricity, perhaps, depends a great part of their effect.

R. B.

XIX.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, April 24, 1793.

I HEARTILY thank you, my dear sir, for your last two letters, and the songs which accompanied them. I am always both instructed and entertained by your observations; and the frankness with which you speak out your mind is to me highly agreeable. It is very possible I may not have the true idea of simplicity in composition. I confess there are several songs, of Allan Ramsay's for example, that I think silly enough, which another person, more conversant than I have been with country people, would perhaps call simple and natural. But the lowest scenes of simple nature will not please generally, if copied precisely as they are. The poet, like the painter, must select what will form an agreeable, as well as a natural picture. On this subject it were easy to enlarge; but at present suffice it to say that I consider simplicity, rightly understood, as a most essential quality in composition, and the groundwork of beauty in all the arts. I will gladly appropriate your most interesting new ballad, "When wild war's deadly blast," &c., to the

"Mill, Mill, O," as well as the two other songs to their respective airs; but the third and fourth lines of the first verse must undergo some little alteration in order to suit the music. Pleyel does not alter a single note of the songs. That would be absurd indeed! With the airs which he introduces into the sonatas, I allow him to take such liberties as he pleases, but that has nothing to do with the songs. G. T.

P.S.—I wish you would do as you proposed with your "Rigs of Barley." If the loose sentiments are thrashed out of it, I will find an air for it; but as to this there is no hurry.

XX.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

June 1793.

WHEN I tell you, my dear sir, that a friend of mine, in whom I am much interested, has fallen a sacrifice to these accursed times, you will easily allow that it might unhinge me for doing any good among ballads. My own loss, as to pecuniary matters, is trifling: but the total ruin of a much-loved friend is a loss indeed. Pardon my seeming inattention to your last commands.

I cannot alter the disputed lines in the "Mill, Mill, O." What you think a defect, I esteem as a positive beauty: so you see how doctors differ. I shall now, with as much alacrity as I can muster, go on with your commands.

You know Fraser, the hautboy-player in Edinburgh—he is here, instructing a band of music for a fencible corps quartered in this country. Among many of his airs that please me, there is one, well known as a reel, by the name of "The Quaker's Wife," and which I remember a grand-aunt of mine used to sing, by the name of "Liggeram Cosh, my bonny wee

lass." Mr. Fraser plays it slow, and with an expression that quite charms me. I became such an enthusiast about it that I made a song for it, which I here subjoin, and enclose Fraser's set of the tune. [See "Blithe hae I been."] If they hit your fancy they are at your service; if not, return me the tune, and I will put it in Johnson's *Museum*. I think the song is not in my worst manner. R. B.

XXI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

June 25, 1793.

HAVE you ever, my dear sir, felt your bosom ready to burst with indignation on reading of those mighty villains who divide kingdom against kingdom, desolate provinces, and lay nations waste, out of the wantonness of ambition, or often from still more ignoble passions? In a mood of this kind to-day, I recollected the air of "Logan Water," and it occurred to me that its querulous melody probably had its origin from the plaintive indignation of some swelling, suffering heart, fired at the tyrannic strides of some public destroyer; and overwhelmed with private distress, the consequence of a country's ruin. If I have done anything at all like justice to my feelings, the following song, composed in three-quarters of an hour's meditation in my elbow-chair, ought to have some merit:—["Logan Braes."]

Do you know the following beautiful little fragment, in Wither-
spoon's collection of Scots songs?—

Air—"Hughie Graham."

"Oh gin my love were yon red rose,
That grows upon the castle wa';
And I mysel a drap o' dew,
Into her bonny breast to fa'!

"Oh, there beyond expression blest,
I'd feast on beauty a' the night;
Seal'd on her silk-soft faulds to rest,
Till fleety'd awa by Phœbus' light."

This thought is inexpressibly beautiful; and quite, so far as I know, original. It is too short for a song, else I would forswear you altogether, unless you gave it a place. I have often tried to eke a stanza to it, but in vain. After balancing myself for a musing five minutes, on the hind-legs of my elbow-chair, I produced the following.

The verses are far inferior to the foregoing, I frankly confess; but, if worthy of insertion at all, they might be first in place; as every poet, who knows anything of his trade, will husband his best thoughts for a concluding stroke:—

Oh were my love yon lilac fair
Wi' purple blossoms to the spring;
And I, a bird to shelter there,
When wearied on my little wing!

How I wad mourn, when it was torn
By autumn wild, and winter rude!
But I would sing on wanton wing,
When youthful May its bloom renew'd.
R. B.

XXII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Monday, July 1, 1793.

I AM extremely sorry, my good sir, that anything should happen to unhinge you. The times are terribly out of tune, and when harmony will be restored, Heaven knows.

The first book of songs, just published, will be despatched to you along with this. Let me be favoured with your opinion of it, frankly and freely.

I shall certainly give a place to the song you have written for the "Quaker's Wife;" it is quite enchanting. Pray will you return the list of songs, with such airs added to it as you think ought to be included. The business now rests entirely on myself, the gentlemen who originally agreed to join the speculation having requested to be

off. No matter, a loser I cannot be. The superior excellence of the work will create a general demand for it, as soon as it is properly known. And, were the sale even slower than it promises to be, I should be somewhat compensated for my labour by the pleasure I shall receive from the music. I cannot express how much I am obliged to you for the exquisite new songs you are sending me; but thanks, my friend, are a poor return for what you have done: as I shall be benefited by the publication, you must suffer me to enclose a small mark of my gratitude, and to repeat it afterwards, when I find it convenient. Do not return it, for, by Heaven! if you do, our correspondence is at an end: and, though this would be no loss to you, it would mar the publication, which, under your auspices, cannot fail to be respectable and interesting.

Wednesday Morning.

I thank you for your delicate additional verses to the old fragment, and for your excellent song to "Logan Water:" Thomson's truly elegant one will follow for the English singer. Your apostrophe to statesmen is admirable, but I am not sure if it is quite suitable to the supposed gentle character of the fair mourner who speaks it.

G. T.

XXIII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

July 2, 1793.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have just finished the following ballad:—"There was a lass, and she was fair,"] and, as I do think it in my best style, I send it you. Mr. Clarke, who wrote down the air from Mrs. Burns's woodnote wild, is very fond of it; and has

given it a celebrity by teaching it to some young ladies of the first fashion here. If you do not like the air enough to give it a place in your collection, please return it. The song you may keep, as I remember it.

I have some thoughts of inserting in your index, or in my notes, the names of the fair ones, the themes of my songs. I do not mean the name at full; but dashes or asterisms, so as ingenuity may find them out.

R. B.

XXIV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

July 1793.

I ASSURE you, my dear sir, that you truly hurt me with your pecuniary parcel. It degrades me in my own eyes. However, to return it would savour of affectation; but, as to any more traffic of that debtor and creditor kind, I swear, by that HONOUR which crowns the upright statue of ROBERT BURNS'S INTEGRITY—on the least motion of it, I will indignantly spurn the by-past transaction, and from that moment commence entire stranger to you! BURNS'S character for generosity of sentiment and independence of mind will, I trust, long outlive any of his wants, which the cold unfeeling ore can supply: at least, I will take care that such a character he shall deserve.

Thank you for my copy of your publication. Never did my eyes behold, in any musical work, such elegance and correctness. Your preface, too, is admirably written: only your partiality to me has made you say too much: however, it will bind me down to double every effort in the future progress of the work. The following are a few remarks on the songs in the list you sent me. I never copy what I write to you,

so I may be often tautological, or perhaps contradictory.

"The Flowers o' the Forest" is charming as a poem, and should be, and must be, set to the notes; but, though out of your rule, the three stanzas, beginning

"I hae seen the smiling o' Fortune beguiling,"

are worthy of a place, were it but to immortalise the author of them, who is an old lady of my acquaintance, and at this moment living in Edinburgh. She is a Mrs. Cockburn; I forget of what place; but from Roxburghshire. What a charming apostrophe is

"O fickle Fortune, why this cruel sport,
Why, why torment us—poor sons of a day!"

The old ballad, "I wish I were where Helen lies," is silly to contemptibility. My alteration of it in Johnson is not much better. Mr. Pinkerton, in his, what he calls, ancient ballads (many of them notorious, though beautiful enough, forgeries) has the best set. It is full of his own interpolations,—but no matter. . . .

In my next I will suggest to your consideration a few songs which may have escaped your hurried notice. In the meantime allow me to congratulate you now, as a brother of the quill. You have committed your character and fame; which will now be tried, for ages to come, by the illustrious jury of the SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF TASTE—all whom poesy can please, or music charm.

Being a bard of Nature, I have some pretensions to second sight; and I am warranted by the spirit to foretell and affirm that your great-grandchild will hold up your volumes, and say, with honest pride, "This so much admired selection was the work of my ancestor!"

R. B.

XXV.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *August 1, 1793*

DEAR SIR,

I had the pleasure of receiving your last two letters, and am happy to find you are quite pleased with the appearance of the first book. When you come to hear the songs sung and accompanied, you will be charmed with them.

"The Bonny Brucket Lassie" certainly deserves better verses, and I hope you will match her. "Cauld Kail in Aberdeen," "Let me in this ae night," and several of the livelier airs, wait the muse's leisure: these are peculiarly worthy of her choice gifts: besides, you'll notice that, in airs of this sort, the singer can always do greater justice to the poet than in the slower airs of "The bush aboon Traquair," "Lord Gregory," and the like; for, in the manner the latter are frequently sung, you must be contented with the sound without the sense. Indeed, both the airs and words are disguised by the very slow, languid, psalm-singing style in which they are too often performed: they lose animation and expression altogether, and instead of speaking to the mind, or touching the heart, they cloy upon the ear, and set us yawning!

Your ballad, "There was a lass, and she was fair," is simple and beautiful, and shall undoubtedly grace my collection. G. T.

XXVI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

August 1793.

YOUR objection, my dear sir, to the passages in my song of "Logan Water," is right in one instance; but it is difficult to mend it; if I can I will. The other passage you object to does not appear in the same light to me.

I have tried my hand on "Robin Adair," [See "Phyllis the Fair,"] and, you will probably think, with little success; but it is such a cursed, cramp, out-of-the-way measure, that I despair of doing anything better to it.

So much for namby-pamby. I may, after all, try my hand on it in Scots verse. There I always find myself most at home.

I have just put the last hand to the song I meant for "Cauld Kail in Aberdeen." If it suits you to insert it, I shall be pleased, as the heroine is a favourite of mine: if not, I shall also be pleased; because I wish, and will be glad, to see you act decidedly in the business. 'Tis a tribute as a man of taste, and as an editor, which you owe yourself.

R. B.

XXVII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

August 1793.

MY GOOD SIR,

I consider it one of the most agreeable circumstances attending this publication of mine that it has procured me so many of your much-valued epistles. Pray make my acknowledgments to St. Stephen for the tunes: tell him I admit the justness of his complaint on my staircase conveyed in his laconic postscript to your *jeu d'esprit*, which I perused more than once, without discovering exactly whether your discussion was music, astronomy, or politics: though a sagacious friend, acquainted with the convivial habits of the poet and the musician, offered me a bet, of two to one, you were just drowning care together; that an empty bowl was the only thing that would deeply affect you, and the only matter you could then study how to remedy!

I shall be glad to see you give "Robin Adair" a Scottish dress.

Peter is furnishing him with an English suit for a change, and you are well matched together. Robin's air is excellent, though he certainly has an out-of-the-way measure as ever poor Parnassian wight was plagued with. I wish you would invoke the muse for a single elegant stanza to be substituted for the concluding objectionable verses of "Down the burn, Davie," so that this most exquisite song may no longer be excluded from good company.

Mr. Allan has made an inimitable drawing from your "John Anderson, my Jo," which I am to have engraved as a frontispiece to the humorous class of songs; you will be quite charmed with it, I promise you. The old couple are seated by the fireside. Mrs. Anderson, in great good-humour, is clapping John's shoulders, while he smiles and looks at her with such glee as to show that he fully recollects the pleasant days and nights when they were "first acquent." The drawing would do honour to the pencil of Teniers.

G. T.

XXVIII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

August 1793.

THAT crinkum-crankum tune "Robin Adair" has run so in my head, and I succeeded so ill in my last attempt, that I have ventured, in this morning's walk, one essay more. You, my dear sir, will remember an unfortunate part of our worthy friend Cunningham's story, which happened about three years ago. That struck my fancy, and I endeavoured to do the idea justice, as follows:—[See "Had I a cave."]

By the way, I have met with a musical Highlander, in Breadalbane's Fencibles, which are quartered here, who assures me that he well remembers his mother's singing

Gaelic songs to both "Robin Adair" and "Gramachree." They certainly have more of the Scotch than the Irish taste in them.

This man comes from the vicinity of Inverness; so it could not be any intercourse with Ireland that could bring them;—except, what I shrewdly suspect to be the case, the wandering minstrels, harpers, and pipers, used to go frequently errant through the wilds both of Scotland and Ireland, and so some favourite airs might be common to both. A case in point—they have lately, in Ireland, published an Irish air, as they say, called "Caun du delish." The fact is, in a publication of Corri's a great while ago, you will find the same air, called a Highland one, with a Gaelic song set to it. Its name there, I think, is "Oran Gaoil," and a fine air it is. Do ask honest Allan, or the reverend Gaelic parson, about these matters. Ever yours,

R. B.

XXIX.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

August 1793.

MY DEAR SIR,

"Let me in this ae night" I will re-consider. I am glad that you are pleased with my song, "Had I a cave," &c., as I liked it myself.

I walked out yesterday evening, with a volume of the *Museum* in my hand; when, turning up "Allan Water," "What numbers shall the muse repeat," &c., as the words appeared to me rather unworthy of so fine an air, and recollecting that it is on your list, I sat and raved under the shade of an old thorn, till I wrote one to suit the measure. [See "By Allan stream."] I may be wrong; but I think it not in my worst style. You must know, that in Ramsay's "Tea Table," where the modern song first appeared, the ancient name of the tune, Allan says, is

"Allan Water;" or, "My love Annie's very bonny." This last has certainly been a line of the original song; so I took up the idea, and, as you will see, have introduced the line in its place, which, I presume, it formerly occupied; though I likewise give you a choosing line, if it should not hit the cut of your fancy.

Bravo! say I: it is a good song. Should you think so too (not else), you can set the music to it, and let the other follow as English verses.

Autumn is my propitious season. I make more verses in it than all the year else.—God bless you!

R. B.

XXX.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

August 1793.

Is "Whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad," one of your airs? I admire it much; and yesterday I set the following verses to it. [See "Oh, whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad."] Urbani, whom I have met with here, begged them of me, as he admires the air much; but, as I understand that he looks with rather an evil eye on your work, I did not choose to comply. However, if the song does not suit your taste, I may possibly send it him. The set of the air which I had in my eye is in Johnson's *Museum*.

Another favourite air of mine is, "The muckin' o' Geordie's byre." When sung slow, with expression, I have wished that it had had better poetry: that I have endeavoured to supply, as follows. [See "Adown winding Nith."]

Mr. Clarke begs you to give Miss Phillis a corner in your book, as she is a particular flame of his. She is a Miss Phillis M'Murdo, sister to "Bonie Jean." They are both pupils of his. You shall hear from me, the very first grist I get from my rhyming-mill.

R. B.

XXXI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

August 1793.

THAT tune, "Cauld Kail," is such a favourite of yours that I once more roved out yesterday for a gloaming-shot at the muses; when the muse that presides o'er the shores of Nith, or rather my old inspiring dearest nymph, Coila, whispered me the following. [See "Come, let me take thee."] I have two reasons for thinking that it was my early, sweet simple inspirer that was by my elbow, "smooth gliding without step," and pouring the song on my glowing fancy. In the first place, since I left Coila's native haunts, not a fragment of a poet has arisen to cheer her solitary musings, by catching inspiration from her; so I more than suspect that she has followed me hither, or at least makes me occasional visits: secondly, the last stanza of this song I send you is the very words that Coila taught me many years ago, and which I set to an old Scots reel in Johnson's *Museum*.

If you think the above will suit your idea of your favourite air, I shall be highly pleased. "The last time I came o'er the moor" I cannot meddle with, as to mending it; and the musical world have been so long accustomed to Ramsay's words that a different song, though positively superior, would not be so well received. I am not fond of choruses to songs, so I have not made one for the foregoing.

R. B.

XXXII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

August 1793.

So much for Davie. [See "Dainty Davie," which the poet enclosed.] The chorus, you know, is to the low

part of the tune.—See Clarke's set of it in the *Museum*.

N.B.—In the *Museum* they have drawled out the tune to twelve lines of poetry, which is cursed nonsense. Four lines of song, and four of chorus, is the way. R. B.

XXXIII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *Sept. 1, 1793*

MY DEAR SIR,

Since writing you last, I have received half a dozen songs, with which I am delighted beyond expression. The humour and fancy of "Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad," will render it nearly as great a favourite as "Duncan Gray." "Come, let me take thee to my breast," "Adown winding Nith," and "By Allan stream," &c., are full of imagination and feeling, and sweetly suit the airs for which they are intended. "Had I a cave on some wild distant shore" is a striking and affecting composition. Our friend, to whose story it refers, read it with a swelling heart, I assure you.—The union we are now forming, I think, can never be broken: these songs of yours will descend with the music to the latest posterity, and will be fondly cherished so long as genius, taste, and sensibility exist in our island.

While the muse seems so propitious, I think it right to enclose a list of all the favours I have to ask of her—no fewer than twenty and three! I have burdened the pleasant Peter with as many as it is probable he will attend to: most of the remaining airs would puzzle the English poet not a little; they are of that peculiar measure and rhythm, that they must be familiar to him who writes for them.

G. T.

XXXIV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Sept. 1793.

You may readily trust, my dear sir, that any exertion in my power is heartily at your service. But one thing I must hint to you; the very name of Peter Pindar is of great service to your publication, so get a verse from him now and then: though I have no objection, as well as I can, to bear the burden of the business.

You know that my pretensions to musical taste are merely a few of nature's instincts, untaught and untutored by art. For this reason, many musical compositions, particularly where much of the merit lies in counterpoint, however they may transport and ravish the ears of you connoisseurs, affect my simple lug no otherwise than merely as melodious din. On the other hand, by way of amends, I am delighted with many little melodies which the learned musician despises as silly and insipid. I do not know whether the old air, "Hey, tuttie taitie," may rank among this number; but well I know that, with Fraser's hautboy, it has often filled my eyes with tears. There is a tradition, which I have met with in many places of Scotland, that it was Robert Bruce's march at the battle of Bannockburn. This thought, in my solitary wanderings, warmed me to a pitch of enthusiasm on the theme of liberty and independence, which I threw into a kind of Scottish ode, ["Bruce's Address to his Army at Bannockburn"] fitted to the air that one might suppose to be the gallant Royal Scot's address to his heroic followers on that eventful morning.

So may God ever defend the cause of truth and liberty, as He did that day!—Amen.

P.S.—I showed the air to Urbani, who was highly pleased with it, and begged me to make soft verses for

it; but I had no idea of giving myself any trouble on the subject, till the accidental recollection of that glorious struggle for freedom, associated with the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature, not quite so ancient, roused my rhyming mania. Clarke's set of the tune, with his bass, you will find in the *Museum*; though I am afraid that the air is not what will entitle it to a place in your elegant selection.

R. B.

XXXV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Sept. 1793.

I DARE say, my dear sir, that you will begin to think my correspondence is persecution. No matter, I can't help it; a ballad is my hobby-horse, which, though otherwise a simple sort of harmless idiotical beast enough, has yet this blessed headstrong property, that, when once it has fairly made off with a hapless wight, it gets so enamoured with the tinkle-gingle, tinkle-gingle of its own bells, that it is sure to run poor pilgarlick, the bedlam jockey, quite beyond any useful point or post in the common race of men.

The following song ["Behold the Hour,"] I have composed for "Orangaol," the Highland air that, you tell me in your last, you have resolved to give a place to in your book. I have this moment finished the song, so you have it glowing from the mint. If it suit you, well!—If not, 'tis also well!

R. B.

XXXVI.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, Sept. 5, 1793.

I BELIEVE it is generally allowed that the greatest modesty is the sure attendant of the greatest merit. While you are sending me verses that even Shakespeare might be

proud to own, you speak of them as if they were ordinary productions! Your heroic ode is, to me, the noblest composition of the kind in the Scottish language. I happened to dine yesterday with a party of your friends, to whom I read it. They were all charmed with it, entreated me to find out a suitable air for it, and reprobated the idea of giving it a tune so totally devoid of interest or grandeur as "Hey, tuttie taitie." Assuredly your partiality for this tune must arise from the ideas associated in your mind by the tradition concerning it; for I never heard any person, and I have conversed again and again with the greatest enthusiasts for Scottish airs—I say, I never heard any one speak of it as worthy of notice.

I have been running over the whole hundred airs of which I lately sent you the list, and I think "Lewie Gordon" is the most happily adapted to your ode; at least with a very slight variation of the fourth line, which I shall presently submit to you. There is in "Lewie Gordon" more of the grand than the plaintive, particularly when it is sung with a degree of spirit which your words would oblige the singer to give it. I would have no scruple about substituting your ode in the room of "Lewie Gordon," which has neither the interest, the grandeur, nor the poetry that characterise your verses. Now the variation I have to suggest upon the last line of each verse—the only line too short for the air—is as follows:—

Verse 1st, Or to glorious victorie.

2d, Chains — chains and
slaverie.

3d, Let him, let him turn
and flee.

4th, Let him bravely follow
me.

5th, But they shall, they
shall be free.

6th, Let us, let us do or die!

If you connect each line with its own verse, I do not think you will find that either the sentiment or the expression loses any of its energy. The only line which I dislike in the whole of the song is, "Welcome to your gory bed." Would not another word be preferable to "welcome?" In your next I will expect to be informed whether you agree to what I have proposed. The little alterations I submit with the greatest deference. The beauty of the verses you have made for "Oran-gaoil" will insure celebrity to the air. G. T.

XXXVII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

September 1793.

I HAVE received your list, my dear sir, and here go my observations on it.

"Down the Burn, Davie." I have this moment tried an alteration, leaving out the last half of the third stanza, and the first half of the last stanza, thus:—

As down the burn they took their way,
And through the flowery dale;
His cheek to hers he aft did lay,
And love was aye the tale.
With "Mary, when shall we return,
Sic pleasure to renew?"
Quoth Mary, "Love, I like the burn,
And aye shall follow you."

"Through the wood, laddie." I am decidedly of opinion that both in this, and "There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame," the second or high part of the tune being a repetition of the first part an octave higher, is only for instrumental music, and would be much better omitted in singing.

"Cowdenknowes." Remember, in your index, that the song in pure English to this tune, beginning—

"When summer comes, the swains on Tweed,"

is the production of Crawford. Robert was his Christian name.

"Laddie, lie near me," must lie by me for some time. I do not know the air; and, until I am complete master of a tune, in my own singing (such as it is), I can never compose for it. My way is: I consider the poetic sentiment correspondent to my idea of the musical expression; then choose my theme; begin one stanza—when that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out, sit down now and then, look out for objects in nature round me that are in unison or harmony with the cogitations of my fancy, and workings of my bosom; humming every now and then the air, with the verses I have framed. When I feel my muse beginning to jade, I retire to the solitary fireside of my study, and there commit my effusions to paper; swinging at intervals on the hind-legs of my elbow-chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures, as my pen goes on. Seriously, this, at home, is almost invariably my way.

What cursed egotism!

"Gil Morris" I am for leaving out. It is a plaguy length; the air itself is never sung, and its place can be well supplied by one or two songs for fine airs that are not in your list. For instance, "Craigieburn wood," and "Roy's Wife." The first, beside its intrinsic merit, has novelty; and the last has high merit as well as great celebrity. I have the original words of a song for the last air, in the handwriting of the lady who composed it; and they are superior to any edition of the song which the public has yet seen.

"Highland laddie." The old set will please a mere Scotch ear best; and the new an Italianised one. There is a third, and, what Oswald calls, the old "Highland laddie," which pleases me more than either

of them. It is sometimes called "Jinglan Johnnie"; it being the air of an old humorous tawdry song of that name. You will find it in the *Museum*, "I hae been at Crookieden," &c. I would advise you, in this musical quandary, to offer up your prayers to the muses for inspiring direction; and, in the meantime, waiting for this direction, bestow a libation to Bacchus; and there is no doubt but you will hit on a judicious choice. *Probatum est.*

"Auld Sir Simon," I must beg you to leave out, and put in its place, "The Quaker's Wife."

"Blithe hae I been o'er the hill," is one of the finest songs I ever made in my life; and, besides, is composed on a young lady, positively the most beautiful, lovely woman in the world. As I purpose giving you the names and designations of all my heroines, to appear in some future edition of your work, perhaps half a century hence, you must certainly include "The bonniest lass in a' the world" in your collection.

"Dainty Davie," I have heard sung nineteen thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine times, and always with the chorus to the low part of the tune; and nothing has surprised me so much as your opinion on this subject. If it will not suit, as I proposed, we will lay two of the stanzas together, and then make the chorus follow.

"Fee him, Father." I enclose you Fraser's set of this tune when he plays it slow; in fact, he makes it the language of despair. I shall here give you two stanzas in that style, merely to try if it will be any improvement. [See the song "Thou hast left me ever."] Were it possible, in singing, to give it half the pathos which Fraser gives it in playing, it would make an admirably pathetic song. I do not give these verses for any merit

they have. I composed them at the time in which "Patie Allan's mither died, that was, about the back o' midnight"; and by the lee-side of a bowl of punch, which had overset every mortal in company, except the hautbois and the muse.

"Jockey and Jenny" I would discard, and in its place would put "There's nae luck about the house," which has a very pleasant air; and which is positively the finest love-ballad in that style in the Scottish, or perhaps in any other, language. "When she cam ben she bobbet," as an air is more beautiful than either, and in the *andante* way would unite with a charming sentimental ballad.

"Saw ye my Father?" is one of my greatest favourites. The evening before last I wandered out and began a tender song, in what I think is its native style. I must premise that the old way, and the way to give most effect, is to have no starting note, as the fiddlers call it, but to burst at once into the pathos. Every country girl sings—"Saw ye my Father?" &c.

My song is but just begun; and I should like, before I proceed, to know your opinion of it. I have sprinkled it with the Scottish dialect, but it may be easily turned into correct English.

"Todlin' hame." Urbani mentioned an idea of his, which has long been mine—that this air is highly susceptible of pathos: accordingly, you will soon hear him at your concert try it to a song of mine in the *Museum*—"Ye banks and braes o' bonny Doon." One song more and I have done—"Auld langsyne." The air is but mediocre; but the following song [see "Auld langsyne"], the old song of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript, until I took it down from

an old man's singing, is enough to recommend any air.

Now, I suppose, I have tired your patience fairly. You must, after all is over, have a number of ballads, properly so called. "Gil Morice," "Tranent Muir," "Macpherson's Farewell," "Battle of Sheriffmuir," or, "We ran and they ran," (I know the author of this charming ballad, and his history,) "Hardknute," "Barbara Allan," (I can furnish a finer set of this tune than any that has yet appeared;) and besides, do you know that I really have the old tune to which "The Cherry and the Slae" was sung; and which is mentioned as a well-known air in "Scotland's Complaint," a book published before poor Mary's days? It was then called "The banks o' Helicon"; an old poem which Pinkerton has brought to light. You will see all this in Tytler's History of Scottish Music. The tune, to a learned ear, may have no great merit; but it is a great curiosity. I have a good many original things of this kind.

R. B.

XXXVIII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

September 1793.

I AM happy, my dear sir, that my ode pleases you so much. Your idea, "honour's bed," is, though a beautiful, a hackneyed idea; so, if you please, we will let the line stand as it is. I have altered the song as follows. [See "Scots wha hae."]]

N.B.—I have borrowed the last stanza from the common stall edition of Wallace :—

"A false usurper sinks in every foe,
And liberty returns with every blow."

A couplet worthy of Homer. Yesterday you had enough of my correspondence. The post goes, and my

head aches miserably. One comfort! I suffer so much, just now, in this world, for last night's joviality, that I shall escape scot-free for it in the world to come. Amen!

R. B.

XXXIX.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

September 12, 1793.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dear sir, for your observations on the list of my songs. I am happy to find your ideas so much in unison with my own, respecting the generality of the airs, as well as the verses. About some of them we differ; but there is no disputing about hobby-horses. I shall not fail to profit by the remarks you make; and to re-consider the whole with attention.

"Dainty Davie" must be sung two stanzas together, and then the chorus; 'tis the proper way. I agree with you that there may be something of pathos, or tenderness at least, in the air of "Fee him, Father," when performed with feeling; but a tender cast may be given almost to any lively air, if you sing it very slowly, expressively, and with serious words. I am, however, clearly and invariably for retaining the cheerful tunes joined to their own humorous verses, wherever the verses are passable. But the sweet song for "Fee him, Father," which you began about the back of midnight, I will publish as an additional one. Mr. James Balfour, the king of good fellows, and the best singer of the lively Scottish ballads that ever existed, has charmed thousands of companies with "Fee him, Father," and with "Todlin' hame" also, to the old words, which never should be disunited from either of these airs. Some Bacchanals I would wish to discard. "Fye, let's

a' to the bridal," for instance, is so coarse and vulgar that I think it fit only to be sung in a company of drunken colliers: and "Saw ye my Father" appears to me both indelicate and silly.

One word more with regard to your heroic ode. I think, with great deference to the poet, that a prudent general would avoid saying anything to his soldiers which might tend to make death more frightful than it is. "Gory" presents a disagreeable image to the mind; and to tell them, "Welcome to your gory bed," seems rather a discouraging address, notwithstanding the alternative which follows. I have shown the song to three friends of excellent taste, and each of them objected to this line, which emboldens me to use the freedom of bringing it again under your notice. I would suggest,

"Now prepare for honour's bed,
Or for glorious Victory."

G. T.

XL.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

September 1793.

"Who shall decide when doctors disagree?" My ode pleases me so much that I cannot alter it. Your proposed alterations would, in my opinion, make it tame. I am exceedingly obliged to you for putting me on re-considering it; as I think I have much improved it. Instead of "soger! hero!" I will have it "Caledonian! on wi' me!"

I have scrutinised it over and over; and to the world, some way or other, it shall go as it is. At the same time, it will not in the least hurt me should you leave it out altogether, and adhere to your first intention of adopting Logan's verses.

I have finished my song to "The Grey Cock"; and in English, as you will see. That there is a

syllable too much for the expression of the air, it is true; but, allow me to say that the mere dividing of a dotted crotchet into a crotchet and a quaver is not a great matter: however, in that, I have no pretensions to cope in judgment with you. Of the poetry I speak with confidence; but the music is a business where I hint my ideas with the utmost diffidence.

The old verses have merit, though unequal, and are popular: my advice is to set the air to the old words, and let mine follow as English verses. Here they are—[See "Where are the joys?"]

Adieu, my dear Sir! The post goes, so I shall defer some other remarks until more leisure.

R. B.

XLI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

September 1793.

I HAVE been turning over some volumes of songs to find verses whose measures would suit the airs for which you have allotted me to find English songs. . . .

For "Muirland Willie," you have, in Ramsay's "Tea-table Miscellany," an excellent song, beginning, "Ah, why those tears in Nelly's eyes?" As for "The Collier's Dochter," take the following old Bacchanal. [See the song "Deluded Swain, the Pleasure."] The faulty line in "Logan Water," I mend thus:

"How can your flinty hearts enjoy
The widow's tears, the orphan's cry?"

The song, otherwise, will pass. As to "M'Gregoir Rua-Ruth," you will see a song of mine to it, with a set of the air superior to yours, in the *Museum*. The song begins—

"Raving winds around her blowing."

Your Irish airs are pretty, but they are downright Irish. If they were like the "Banks of Banna," for instance, though really Irish, yet in the Scottish taste, you might adopt them. Since you are so fond of Irish music, what say you to twenty-five of them in an additional number? We could easily find this quantity of charming airs; I will take care that you shall not want songs; and I assure you that you would find it the most saleable of the whole. If you do not approve of "Roy's Wife," for the music's sake, we shall not insert it. "Deil tak the Wars," is a charming song; so is "Saw ye my Peggie?" "There's nae luck about the House" well deserves a place. I cannot say that "O'er the hills and far awa," strikes me as equal to your selection. "This is no my ain House," is a great favourite air of mine; and, if you will send me your set of it, I will task my muse to her highest effort. What is your opinion of "I hae laid a herrin' in sawt?" I like it much. Your Jacobite airs are pretty: and there are many others of the same kind, pretty; but you have not room for them. You cannot, I think, insert, "Fye, let's a' to the bridal," to any other words than its own.

What pleases me as simple and *naïve* disgusts you as ludicrous and low. For this reason, "Fye, gie me my coggie, sirs," "Fye, let us a' to the bridal," with several others of that cast, are, to me, highly pleasing; while, "Saw ye my Father, or saw ye my Mother?" delights me with its descriptive, simple pathos. Thus my song, "Ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?" pleases myself so much that I cannot try my hand at another song to the air, so I shall not attempt it. I know you will laugh at all this; but "Ilka man wears his belt his ain gait." R. B.

XLII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

October 1793.

YOUR last letter, my dear Thomson, was indeed laden with heavy news. Alas! poor Erskine! The recollection that he was a coadjutor in your publication has, till now, scared me from writing to you, or turning my thoughts on composing for you.

I am pleased that you are reconciled to the air of the "Quaker's Wife"; though, by the bye, an old Highland gentleman and a deep antiquary, tells me it is a Gaelic air, and known by the name of "Leiger 'm choss." The following verses ["Thine am I"], I hope will please you, as an English song to the air.

Your objection to the English song I proposed for "John Anderson, my jo," is certainly just. The following is by an old acquaintance of mine, and I think has merit. The song was never in print, which I think is so much in your favour. The more original good poetry your collection contains, it certainly has so much the more merit:—

SONG.

BY GAVIN TURNBULL.

"O CONDESCEND, dear charming maid,
My wretched state to view;
A tender swain to love betray'd,
And sad despair, by you.

"While here, all melancholy,
My passion I deplore,
Yet, urged by stern resistless fate,
I love thee more and more.

"I heard of love, and with disdain
The urchin's power denied:
I laugh'd at every lover's pain,
And mock'd them when they sigh'd.

"But how my state is alter'd!
Those happy days are o'er;
For all thy unrelenting hate,
I love thee more and more.

"O yield, illustrious beauty, yield!
No longer let me mourn;
And, though victorious in the field,
Thy captive do not scorn.

"Let generous pity warm thee,
My wonted peace restore ;
And, grateful, I shall bless thee still,
And love thee more and more."

The following address of Turnbull's to the Nightingale will suit as an English song to the air, "There was a lass and she was fair." By the bye, Turnbull has a great many songs in MS., which I can command, if you like his manner. Possibly, as he is an old friend of mine, I may be prejudiced in his favour ; but I like some of his pieces very much :—

THE NIGHTINGALE.

By G. TURNBULL.

"Thou sweetest minstrel of the grove
That ever tried the plaintive strain ;
Awake thy tender tale of love,
And soothe a poor forsaken swain.

"For, though the muses deign to aid,
And teach him smoothly to complain,
Yet, Delia, charming, cruel maid,
Is deaf to her forsaken swain.

"All day, with Fashion's gaudy sons,
In sport she wanders o'er the plain ;
Their tales approves, and still she shuns
The notes of her forsaken swain.

"When evening shades obscure the sky,
And bring the solemn hours again,
Begin, sweet bird, thy melody,
And soothe a poor forsaken swain."

I shall just transcribe another of Turnbull's, which would go charmingly to "Lewie Gordon" :—

LAURA.

By G. TURNBULL.

"LET me wander where I will,
By shady wood, or winding rill ;
Where the sweetest May-born flowers
Paint the meadows, deck the bowers ;
Where the linnet's early song
Echoes sweet the woods among ;
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still.

"If at rosy dawn I choose
To indulge the smiling muse ;
If I court some cool retreat,
To avoid the noontide heat ;
If beneath the moon's pale ray,
Through unfrequented wilds I stray ;
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still.

"When at night the drowsy god
Waves his sleep-compelling rod,
And to fancy's wakeful eyes
Bids celestial visions rise ;

While with boundless joy I rove
Through the fairy land of love :
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still."

The rest of your letter I shall answer at some other opportunity.

R. B.

[Gavin Turnbull was the author of a volume entitled "*Poetical Essays*," published in Glasgow in 1788.]

XLIII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Nov. 7, 1793.

MY GOOD SIR,

After so long a silence it gave me peculiar pleasure to recognise your well-known hand, for I had begun to be apprehensive that all was not well with you. I am happy to find, however, that your silence did not proceed from that cause, and that you have got among the ballads once more.

I have to thank you for your English song to "Leiger 'm choss," which I think extremely good, although the colouring is warm. Your friend Mr. Turnbull's songs have doubtless considerable merit ; and, as you have the command of his manuscripts, I hope you may find out some that will answer as English songs, to the airs yet unprovided.

G. T.

XLIV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Dec. 1793.

TELL me how you like the following verses ["My spouse, Nancy"] to the tune of "My Jo Janet."

R. B.

XLV.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, April 17, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,

Owing to the distress of our friend [Cunningham] for the loss of

his child, at the time of his receiving your admirable but melancholy letter, I had not an opportunity till lately of perusing it. How sorry I am to find Burns saying, "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?" while he is delighting others from one end of the island to the other. Like the hypochondriac who went to consult a physician upon his case—"Go," says the doctor, "and see the famous Carlini, who keeps all Paris in good humour." "Alas! sir," replied the patient, "I am that unhappy Carlini."

Your plan for our meeting together pleases me greatly, and I trust that by some means or other it will soon take place; but your Bacchanalian challenge almost frightens me, for I am a miserably weak drinker!

Allan is much gratified by your good opinion of his talents. He has just begun a sketch from your "Cotter's Saturday Night," and if it pleases himself in the design, he will probably etch or engrave it. In subjects of the pastoral and humorous kind, he is perhaps unrivalled by any artist living. He fails a little in giving beauty and grace to his females, and his colouring is sombre; otherwise, his paintings and drawings would be in greater request.

I like the music of the "Sutor's Tochter," and will consider whether it shall be added to the last volume; your verses to it are pretty; but your humorous English song to suit "Jo Janet," is inimitable. What think you of the air, "Within a mile of Edinburgh?" It has always struck me as a modern English imitation, but it is said to be Oswald's, and is so much liked that I believe I must include it. The verses are little better than namby-pamby. Do you consider it worth a stanza or two?

G. T.

XLVI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

June 1794

MY DEAR SIR,

I return you the plates, with which I am highly pleased; I would humbly propose, instead of the younker knitting stockings, to put a stock and horn into his hands. A friend of mine, who is positively the ablest judge on the subject I have ever met with, and, though an unknown, is yet a superior, artist with the burin, is quite charmed with Allan's manner. I got him a peep of the Gentle Shepherd; and he pronounces Allan a most original artist of great excellence.

For my part, I look on Mr. Allan's choosing my favourite poem for his subject, to be one of the highest compliments I have ever received.

I am quite vexed at Pleyel's being cooped up in France, as it will put an entire stop to our work. Now, and for six or seven months, I shall be quite in song, as you shall see by and by. I got an air, pretty enough, composed by Lady Elizabeth Heron, of Heron, which she calls "The Banks of Cree." Cree is a beautiful romantic stream: and, as her ladyship is a particular friend of mine, I have written the following song to it—[See "Here is the Glen."] R. B.

XLVII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

July 1794

Is there no news yet, my dear Sir, of Pleyel? Or is your work to be at a dead stop, until these glorious Crusaders, the Allies, set our modern Orpheus at liberty from the savage thralldom of Democratic discords? Alas the day! and woe is me! That auspicious period, pregnant with the happiness of Millions—that golden

age, spotless with monarchical innocence and despotic purity—that Millenium, of which the earliest dawn will enlighten even Republican turbulence, and show the swinish multitude that they are but beasts, and, like beasts, must be led by the nose, and goaded in the backside—those days of sweet chords and concords seem by no means near.

Oh that mine eyes were fountains of water for thy rueful sake, poor Prussia! that as thy ire has deluged the plains of Flanders, so might my grief inundate the regions of Gallovidia. Ye children of success, ye sons of prosperity, ye who never shed the tear of sorrow, or felt a wish unsatisfied, spare your reproaches and the left-handed shifts and shuffling of unhappy Brandenburg! Once was his rectitude straight as the shafts of the Archers of Edina, and stubborn as the granite of Gallovidian hills—the Batavian witnessed his bowels of compassion, and Sarmatia rejoiced in his truth. But alas! The needy man who has known better times can only console himself with a song, thus:—

While princes, and prelates, and hot-headed zealots
A' Europe had set in a low, a low, etc.

So much for nonsense! I have sent you by my much-valued friend, Mr. Syme, of this place, the pebble for my seal. You will please remember that my holly is a bush, not a tree.

I have three or four songs on the way for you; but I have not yet put the last touch to them. Pray, are you going to insert "Bannockburn," or "Will thou be my dearie?" in your Collection? If you are not, let me know, as in that case I will give them to Johnson's *Museum*. I told you that our friend Clarke is quite an enthusiast in the idea that the air, "Nancy's to the greenwood gane," is capable of sentiment and pathos in a high degree. In this, if I remember right, you did not agree with him. I intend setting my verses

which I wrote and sent you for "The last time I came o'er the moor," to this air. I have made an alteration in the beginning of the song, which you will find on the new page. . . .

I have presented a copy of your songs to the daughter of a much-valued and much-honoured friend of mine, Mr. Graham of Fintry. I wrote on the blank side of the title page, the following address to the young lady:—

"Here, where the Scottish Muse immortal lives
In sacred strains and tuneless numbers joined,
Accept the gift; though humble he that gives,
Rich is the tribute of the grateful mind," etc.

I have also promised the young lady a copy of your sonatas; will you have the goodness to send a copy directed to Miss Graham of Fintry.

Another friend of mine goes to town in a week or so, when you shall again have another packet of nonsense from—Yours, R. B.

XLVIII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, Aug. 10, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,

I owe you an apology for having so long delayed to acknowledge the favour of your last. I fear it will be as you say, I shall have no more songs from Pleyel till France and we are friends; but, nevertheless, I am very desirous to be prepared with the poetry, and, as the season approaches in which your muse of Coila visits you, I trust I shall, as formerly, be frequently gratified with the result of your amorous and tender interviews!

G. T.

XLIX.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Aug. 30, 1794.

THE last evening, as I was straying out, and thinking of "O'er the hills

and far away," I spun the following stanzas for it [see "On the Seas and Far Away"]; but whether my spinning will deserve to be laid up in store, like the precious thread of the silk-worm, or brushed to the devil like the vile manufacture of the spider, I leave, my dear sir, to your usual candid criticism. I was pleased with several lines in it, at first; but I own that now it appears rather a flimsy business.

This is just a hasty sketch, until I see whether it be worth a critique. We have many sailor songs; but, as far as I at present recollect, they are mostly the effusions of the jovial sailor, not the wailings of the love-lorn mistress. I must here make one sweet exception—"Sweet Annie frae the Sea-beach came."

I give you leave to abuse this song, but do it in the spirit of Christian meekness. R. B.

L.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *Sept.* 16, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,

You have anticipated my opinion of "On the seas and far away"; I do not think it one of your very happy productions, though it certainly contains stanzas that are worthy of all acceptance.

The second stanza is the least to my liking, particularly "Bullets, spare my only joy." Confound the bullets! It might, perhaps, be objected to the third verse, "At the starless midnight hour," that it has too much grandeur of imagery, and that greater simplicity of thought would have better suited the character of a sailor's sweetheart. The tune, it must be remembered, is of the brisk, cheerful kind. Upon the whole, therefore, in my humble opinion, the song would be better

adapted to the tune, if it consisted only of the first and last verses, with the choruses. G. T.

LI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Sept. 1794.

I SHALL withdraw my "On the seas and far away" altogether: it is unequal, and unworthy the work. Making a poem is like begetting a son: you cannot know whether you have a wise man or a fool, until you produce him to the world to try him.

For that reason I send you the offspring of my brain, abortions and all; and as such, pray look over them and forgive them, and burn them. I am flattered at your adopting "Ca' the Yowes to the Knowes," as it was owing to me that it ever saw the light. About seven years ago, I was well acquainted with a worthy little fellow of a clergyman, a Mr. Clunie, who sung it charmingly; and, at my request, Mr. Clarke took it down from his singing. When I gave it to Johnson, I added some stanzas to the song, and mended others, but still it will not do for you. In a solitary stroll, which I took to-day, I tried my hand on a few pastoral lines, following up the idea of the chorus, which I would preserve. Here it is, with all its crudities and imperfections on its head. [See "Ca' the Yowes."]

I shall give you my opinion of your other newly-adopted songs, my first scribbling fit. R. B.

LII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Sept. 1794.

Do you know a blackguard Irish song, called "Oonagh's Waterfall"?

The air is charming, and I have often regretted the want of decent verses to it. It is too much, at least for my humble rustic muse, to expect that every effort of hers shall have merit: still I think that it is better to have mediocre verses to a favourite air than none at all. On this principle I have all along proceeded in the *Scots Musical Museum*; and, as that publication is at its last volume, I intend the following song ["She says she lo'es me best of a'"], to the air above mentioned, for that work.

If it does not suit you as an editor, you may be pleased to have verses to it that you can sing before ladies.

Not to compare small things with great, my taste in music is like the mighty Frederick of Prussia's taste in painting: we are told that he frequently admired what the connoisseurs decried, and always, without any hypocrisy, confessed his admiration. I am sensible that my taste in music must be inelegant and vulgar, because people of undisputed and cultivated taste can find no merit in my favourite tunes. Still, because I am cheaply pleased, is that any reason why I should deny myself that pleasure? Many of our strathspeys, ancient and modern, give me most exquisite enjoyment, where you and other judges would probably be showing disgust. For instance, I am just now making verses for "Rothiemurchie's Rant," an air which puts me in raptures; and, in fact, unless I be pleased with the tune, I never can make verses to it. Here I have Clarke on my side, who is a judge that I will pit against any of you. "Rothiemurchie," he says, is an air both original and beautiful; and, on his recommendation, I have taken the first part of the tune for a chorus, and the fourth, or last part, for the song. I am but two stanzas deep in the work, and

possibly you may think, and justly, that the poetry is as little worth your attention as the music.

I have begun anew, "Let me in this ae night." Do you think we ought to retain the old chorus? I think we must retain both the old chorus and the first stanza of the old song. I do not altogether like the third line of the first stanza, but cannot alter it to please myself. I am just three stanzas deep in it. Would you have the *dénouement* to be successful or otherwise? Should she "let him in" or not?

Did you not once propose "The Sow's tail to Geordie" as an air for your work? I am quite delighted with it; but I acknowledge that is no mark of its real excellence. I once set about verses for it, which I meant to be in the alternate way of a lover and his mistress chanting together. I have not the pleasure of knowing Mrs. Thomson's Christian name, and yours, I am afraid, is rather burlesque for sentiment, else I had meant to have made you and her the hero and heroine of the little piece. . . .

God grant you patience with this stupid epistle! R. B.

LIII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Oct. 1794.

I PERCEIVE the sprightly muse is now attendant upon her favourite poet, whose "wood notes wild" are become as enchanting as ever. "She says she lo'es me best of a'," is one of the pleasantest table songs I have seen, and henceforth shall be mine when the song is going round. I'll give Cunningham a copy; he can more powerfully proclaim its merit. I am far from undervaluing your taste for the strathspey music; on the contrary, I think it highly animating and agreeable, and that some of the

strathspeys, when graced with such verses as yours, will make very pleasing songs, in the same way that rough Christians are tempered and softened by lovely women, without whom, you know, they had been brutes.

I am clear for having the "Sow's tail," particularly as your proposed verses to it are so extremely promising. Geordie, as you observe, is a name only fit for burlesque composition. Mrs. Thomson's name (Katharine) is not at all poetical. Retain Jeanie, therefore, and make the other Jamie, or any other that sounds agreeably.

Your "Ca' the ewes" is a precious little *morceau*. Indeed, I am perfectly astonished and charmed with the endless variety of your fancy. Here let me ask you whether you never seriously turned your thoughts upon dramatic writing? That is a field worthy of your genius, in which it might shine forth in all its splendour. One or two successful pieces upon the London stage would make your fortune. The rage at present is for musical dramas: few or none of those which have appeared since the "Duenna" possess much poetical merit: there is little in the conduct of the fable, or in the dialogue, to interest the audience. They are chiefly vehicles for music and pageantry. I think you might produce a comic opera in three acts, which would live by the poetry, at the same time that it would be proper to take every assistance from her tuneful sister. Part of the songs, of course, would be to our favourite Scottish airs; the rest might be left to the London composer—Storace for Drury Lane, or Shield for Covent Garden; both of them very able and popular musicians. I believe that interest and manœuvring are often necessary to have a drama brought on: so it may be with the namby-pamby tribe of flowery

scribblers; but were you to address Mr. Sheridan himself by letter, and send him a dramatic piece, I am persuaded he would, for the honour of genius, give it a fair and candid trial. Excuse me for obtruding these hints upon your consideration.

G. T.

LIV.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, Oct. 14, 1794.

THE last eight days have been devoted to the re-examination of the Scottish collections. I have read, and sung, and fiddled, and considered, till I am half blind and wholly stupid. The few airs I have added are enclosed.

Peter Pindar has at length sent me all the songs I expected from him, which are, in general, elegant and beautiful. Have you heard of a London collection of Scottish airs and songs, just published by Mr. Ritson, an Englishman? I shall send you a copy. His introductory essay on the subject is curious, and evinces great reading and research, but does not decide the question as to the origin of our melodies; though he shows clearly that Mr. Tytler, in his ingenious dissertation, has adduced no sort of proof of the hypothesis he wished to establish; and that his classification of the airs, according to the eras when they were composed, is mere fancy and conjecture. On John Pinkerton, Esq., he has no mercy; but consigns him to damnation! He snarls at my publication on the score of Pindar being engaged to write songs for it, uncandidly and unjustly leaving it to be inferred that the songs of Scottish writers had been sent a packing to make room for Peter's. Of you he speaks with some respect, but gives you a passing hit or two for daring to dress up a little some old foolish songs for the *Museum*.

His sets of the Scottish airs are taken, he says, from the oldest collections and best authorities: many of them, however, have such a strange aspect, and are so unlike the sets which are sung by every person of taste, old or young, in town or country, that we can scarcely recognise the features of our favourites. By going to the oldest collections of our music, it does not follow that we find the melodies in their original state. These melodies had been preserved, we know not how long, by oral communication, before being collected and printed: and, as different persons sing the same air very differently, according to their accurate or confused recollection of it, so, even supposing the first collectors to have possessed the industry, the taste, and discernment to choose the best they could hear (which is far from certain), still it must evidently be a chance whether the collections exhibit any of the melodies in the state they were first composed. In selecting the melodies for my own collection, I have been as much guided by the living as by the dead. Where these differed, I preferred the sets that appeared to me the most simple and beautiful, and the most generally approved; and, without meaning any compliment to my own capability of choosing, or speaking of the pains I have taken, I flatter myself that my sets will be found equally freed from vulgar errors on the one hand, and affected graces on the other

G. T.

LV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Oct. 19, 1794.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

By this morning's post I have your list, and in general, I highly approve of it. I shall, at more

leisure, give you a critique on the whole. Clarke goes to your town by to-day's fly, and I wish you would call on him and take his opinion in general: you know his taste is a standard. He will return here again in a week or two; so, please do not miss asking for him. One thing I hope he will do, persuade you to adopt my favourite, "Craigieburn Wood," in your selection: it is as great a favourite of his as of mine. The lady on whom it was made is one of the finest women in Scotland; and, in fact, *entre nous*, is in a manner, to me, what Sterne's Eliza was to him—a mistress, or friend, or what you will, in the guileless simplicity of Platonic love. (Now don't put any of your squinting constructions on this, or have any clishmaclaver about it among our acquaintances.) I assure you that to my lovely friend you are indebted for many of your best songs of mine. Do you think that the sober, gin-horse routine of existence could inspire a man with life, and love, and joy—could fire him with enthusiasm, or melt him with pathos equal to the genius of your book?—No! No!—Whenever I want to be more than ordinary in song; to be in some degree equal to your diviner airs; do you imagine I fast and pray for the celestial emanation? *Tout au contraire!* I have a glorious recipe; the very one that for his own use was invented by the divinity of healing and poetry, when erst he piped to the flocks of Admetus. I put myself on a regimen of admiring a fine woman; and in proportion to the adorability of her charms, in proportion you are delighted with my verses. The "glance of her eye is the goddess of Persuasion," and the witchery of her smile the divinity of Helicon!

To descend to business; if you like my idea of "When she cam ben she bobbit," the following stanzas of

mine ["Saw ye my Phely"], altered a little from what they were formerly, when set to another air, may perhaps do instead of worse stanzas.

Now for a few miscellaneous remarks. "The Posie" (in the *Museum*) is my composition; the air was taken down from Mrs. Burns's voice. It is well known in the west country, but the old words are trash. By the by, take a look at the tune again, and tell me if you do not think it is the original from which "Roslin Castle" is composed. The second part, in particular, for the first two or three bars, is exactly the old air. "Strathallan's Lament" is mine: the music is by our right trusty and deservedly well-beloved Allan Masterton. "Donocht-Head" is not mine: I would give ten pounds it were. It appeared first in the *Edinburgh Herald*; and came to the editor of that paper with the New-castle post-mark on it. "Whistle o'er the lave o't" is mine: the music said to be by a John Bruce, a celebrated violin player in Dumfries, about the beginning of this century. This I know, Bruce, who was an honest man, though a red-wud Highlandman, constantly claimed it; and, by all the old musical people here, is believed to be the author of it.

"Andrew and his cutty gun." The song to which this is set in the *Museum* is mine, and was composed on Miss Euphemia Murray, of Lintrose, commonly and deservedly called the Flower of Strathmore.

"How long and dreary is the night." I met with some such words in a collection of songs somewhere, which I altered and enlarged; and, to please you, and to suit your favourite air, I have taken a stride or two across my room, and have arranged it anew, as you will find on the other page—[See "How lang and dreary is the night."]

Tell me how you like this. I

differ from your idea of the expression of the tune. There is, to me, a great deal of tenderness in it. You cannot, in my opinion, dispense with a bass to your addenda airs. A lady of my acquaintance, a noted performer, plays and sings at the same time so charmingly that I shall never bear to see any of her songs sent into the world, as naked as Mr. What-d'y-e-call-um (Ritson) has done in his London collection.

These English songs gravel me to death. I have not that command of the language that I have of my native tongue. I have been at "Duncan Gray," to dress it in English, but all I can do is deplorably stupid. For instance—[See "Let not woman e'er complain."]

Since the above, I have been out in the country, taking a dinner with a friend, where I met with the lady whom I mentioned in the second page of this odds-and-ends of a letter. As usual, I got into song; and, returning home, I composed the following—["The Lover's Morning Salute to his Mistress."]

If you honour my verses by setting the air to them, I will vamp up the old song, and make it English enough to be understood.

I enclose you a musical curiosity, an East Indian air, which you would swear was a Scottish one. I know the authenticity of it, as the gentleman who brought it over is a particular acquaintance of mine. Do preserve me the copy I send you, as it is the only one I have. Clarke has set a bass to it, and I intend to put it into the *Musical Museum*. Here follow the verses I intend for it. * * *

I would be obliged to you if you would procure me a sight of Ritson's collection of English songs, which you mention in your letter. I will thank you for another information, and that as speedily as you please—whether this miserable drawing

hotch-potch epistle has not completely tired you of my correspondence?

R. B.

LVI.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, Oct. 27, 1794.

I AM sensible, my dear friend, that a genuine poet can no more exist without his mistress than his meat. I wish I knew the adorable she, whose bright eyes and witching smiles have so often enraptured the Scottish bard, that I might drink her sweet health when the toast is going round. "Craigieburn Wood" must certainly be adopted into my family, since she is the object of the song; but, in the name of decency, I must beg a new chorus-verse from you. "Oh to be lying beyond thee, dearie," is, perhaps, a consummation to be wished, but will not do for singing in the company of ladies. The songs in your last will do you lasting credit, and suit the respective airs charmingly. I am perfectly of your opinion with respect to the additional airs: the idea of sending them into the world naked as they were born was ungenerous. They must all be clothed and made decent by our friend Clarke.

I find I am anticipated by the friendly Cunningham in sending you Ritson's Scottish Collection. Permit me, therefore, to present you with his English Collection, which you will receive by the coach. I do not find his Historical Essay on Scottish Song interesting. Your anecdotes and miscellaneous remarks will, I am sure, be much more so. Allan has just sketched a charming design from "Maggie Lauder." She is dancing with such spirit as to electrify the piper, who seems almost dancing too, while he is playing with the most exquisite glee. I am much inclined to get

a small copy, and to have it engraved in the style of Ritson's prints.

P.S.—Pray what do your anecdotes say concerning "Maggie Lauder?" Was she a real personage, and of what rank? You would surely "spier for her, if you ca'd at Anster town."

G. T.

LVII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Nov. 1794.

MANY thanks to you, my dear Sir, for your present: it is a book of the utmost importance to me. I have yesterday begun my anecdotes, &c., for your work. I intend drawing them up in the form of a letter to you, which will save me from the tedious dull business of systematic arrangement. Indeed, as all I have to say consists of unconnected remarks, anecdotes, scraps of old songs, &c., it would be impossible to give the work a beginning, a middle, and an end, which the critics insist to be absolutely necessary in a work. In my last I told you my objections to the song you had selected for "My lodging is on the cold ground." On my visit, the other day, to my fair Chloris (that is the poetic name of the lovely goddess of my inspiration), she suggested an idea, which I, on my return from the visit, wrought into the following song—[See "Behold, my love, how green the groves."]

How do you like the simplicity and tenderness of this pastoral?—I think it pretty well.

I like you for entering so candidly and so kindly into the story of *ma chère amie*. I assure you I was never more in earnest in my life than in the account of that affair which I sent you in my last. Conjugal love is a passion which I deeply

feel, and highly venerate ; but somehow, it does not make such a figure in poesy as that other species of the passion,

"Where Love is liberty, and Nature law."

Musically speaking, the first is an instrument of which the gamut is scanty and confined, but the tones inexpressibly sweet ; while the last has powers equal to all the intellectual modulation of the human soul. Still, I am a very poet in my enthusiasm of the passion. The welfare and happiness of the beloved object is the first and inviolate sentiment that pervades my soul ; and whatever pleasure I might wish for, or whatever might be the raptures they would give me, yet, if they interfere with that first principle, it is having these pleasures at a dishonest price ; and justice forbids, and generosity disdains the purchase. . . .

Despairing of my own powers to give you variety enough in English songs, I have been turning over old collections, to pick out songs, of which the measure is something similar to what I want ; and, with a little alteration, so as to suit the rhythm of the air exactly, to give you them for your work. Where the songs have hitherto been but little noticed, nor have ever been set to music, I think the shift a fair one. A song, which, under the same first verse, you will find in Ramsay's "Tea-table Miscellany," I have cut down for an English dress to your "Dainty Davie," as follows—[See "The charming month of May."]

You may think meanly of this, but take a look at the bombast original, and you will be surprised that I have made so much of it. I have finished my song to "Rothiemurichie's Rant" ; and you have Clarke to consult, as to the set of the air for singing—["Lassie wi' the lint-white locks."]

This piece has at least the merit of

being a regular pastoral : the vernal morn, the summer noon, the autumnal evening, and the winter night, are regularly rounded. If you like it, well : if not, I will insert it in the *Museum*.
R. B.

LVIII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

I AM out of temper that you should set so sweet, so tender an air as "Deil tak the Wars," to the foolish old verses. You talk of the silliness of "Saw ye my Father" ; by heavens, the odds is gold to brass ! Besides, the old song, though now pretty well modernised into the Scottish language, is originally, and in the early editions, a bungling low imitation of the Scottish manner, by that genius, Tom D'Urfey ; so has no pretensions to be a Scottish production. There is a pretty English song, by Sheridan, in the "Duenna," to this air, which is out of sight superior to D'Urfey's. It begins—

"When sable night each drooping plant
restoring."

The air, if I understand the expression of it properly, is the very native language of simplicity, tenderness, and love.

Now for my English song to "Nancy's to the Greenwood," &c.—[See "Farewell, thou stream."]

There is an air, "The Caledonian Hunt's Delight," to which I wrote a song that you will find in Johnson,—"Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon ;" this air, I think, might find a place among your hundred, as Lear says of his knights. Do you know the history of the air ? It is curious enough. A good many years ago, Mr. James Miller, writer in your good town—a gentleman, whom, possibly, you know—was in company with our friend Clarke ; and talking of Scottish music, Miller expressed an ardent

ambition to be able to compose a Scots air. Mr. Clarke, partly by way of joke, told him to keep to the black keys of the harpsichord, and preserve some kind of rhythm, and he would infallibly compose a Scots air. Certain it is, that in a few days, Mr. Miller produced the rudiments of an air, which Mr. Clarke, with some touches and corrections, fashioned into the tune in question. Ritson, you know, has the same story of the black keys; but this account which I have just given you, Mr. Clarke informed me of several years ago. Now, to show you how difficult it is to trace the origin of our airs, I have heard it repeatedly asserted that this was an Irish air nay, I met with an Irish gentleman who affirmed he had heard it in Ireland among the old women; while, on the other hand, a countess informed me that the first person who introduced the air into this country was a baronet's lady of her acquaintance who took down the notes from an itinerant piper in the Isle of Man. How difficult, then, to ascertain the truth respecting our pöesy and music! I, myself, have lately seen a couple of ballads sung through the streets of Dumfries, with my name at the head of them as the author, though it was the first time I had ever seen them.

I thank you for admitting "Craigieburn Wood," and I shall take care to furnish you with a new chorus. In fact, the chorus was not my work, but a part of some old verses to the air. If I can catch myself in a more than ordinarily propitious moment, I shall write a new "Craigieburn Wood" altogether. My heart is much in the theme.

I am ashamed, my dear fellow, to make the request; 'tis dunning your generosity; but in a moment when I had forgotten whether I was rich or poor, I promised Chloris a copy

of your songs. It wrings my honest pride to write you this; but an ungracious request is doubly so by a tedious apology. To make you some amends, as soon as I have extracted the necessary information out of them, I will return you Ritson's volumes.

The lady is not a little proud that she is to make so distinguished a figure in your collection, and I am not a little proud that I have it in my power to please her so much. Lucky it is for your patience that my paper is done, for, when I am in a scribbling humour, I know not when to give over.

R. B.

LIX.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *Nov. 15, 1794.*

MY GOOD SIR,

Since receiving your last, I have had another interview with Mr. Clarke, and a long consultation. He thinks the "Caledonian Hunt" is more Bacchanalian than amorous in its nature, and recommends it to you to match the air accordingly. Pray, did it ever occur to you how peculiarly well the Scottish airs are adapted for verses in the form of a dialogue? The first part of the air is generally low, and suited for a man's voice, and the second part, in many instances, cannot be sung, at concert pitch, but by a female voice. A song, thus performed, makes an agreeable variety, but few of ours are written in this form: I wish you would think of it in some of those that remain. The only one of the kind you have sent me is admirable, and will be a universal favourite.

Your verses for "Rothiemurichie" are so sweetly pastoral, and your serenade to Chloris, for "Deil tak the Wars," so passionately tender, that I have sung myself into raptures

with them. Your song for "My lodging is on the cold ground," is likewise a diamond of the first water; I am quite dazzled and delighted with it. Some of your Chlorises, I suppose, have flaxen hair, from your partiality for this colour; else we differ about it; for I should scarcely conceive a woman to be a beauty, and reading that she had lint-white locks!

"Farewell, thou stream that winding flows," I think excellent, but it is much too serious to come after "Nancy": at least it would seem an incongruity to provide the same air with merry Scottish, and melancholy English, verses! The more that the two sets of verses resemble each other in their general character the better. Those you have manufactured for "Dainty Davie" will answer charmingly. I am happy to find you have begun your anecdotes. I care not how long they be, for it is impossible that anything from your pen can be tedious. Let me beseech you not to use ceremony in telling me when you wish to present any of your friends with the songs: the next carrier will bring you three copies, and you are as welcome to twenty as to a pinch of snuff.

G. T.

LX.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Nov. 19, 1794.

You see, my dear Sir, what a punctual correspondent I am; though indeed you may thank yourself for the tedium of my letters, as you have so flattered me on my horsemanship with my favourite hobby, and have praised the grace of his ambling so much, that I am scarcely ever off his back. For instance, this morning, though a keen blowing frost, in my walk before breakfast, I finished my duet,

which you were pleased to praise so much. Whether I have uniformly succeeded, I will not say; but here it is for you, though it is not an hour old—[See "O Philly, happy be that day."]

Tell me, honestly, how you like it; and point out whatever you think faulty.

I am much pleased with your idea of singing our songs in alternate stanzas, and regret that you did not hint it to me sooner. In those that remain I shall have it in my eye. I remember your objections to the name, Philly; but it is the common abbreviation of Phillis. Sally, the only other name that suits, has, to my ear, a vulgarity about it, which unfits it for anything except burlesque. The legion of Scottish poetasters of the day, whom your brother editor, Mr. Ritson, ranks with me, as my coevals, have always mistaken vulgarity for simplicity: whereas, simplicity is as much *éloignée* from vulgarity, on the one hand, as from affected point and puerile conceit on the other.

I agree with you, as to the air "Craigieburn Wood," that a chorus would, in some degree, spoil the effect; and shall certainly have none in my projected song to it. It is not, however, a case in point with "Rothiemurichie"; there, as in "Roy's Wife of Aldivallock," a chorus goes, to my taste, well enough. As to the chorus going first, that is the case with "Roy's Wife" as well as "Rothiemurichie." In fact, in the first part of both tunes the rhythm is so peculiar and irregular, and on that irregularity depends so much of their beauty, that we must even take them with all their wildness, and humour the verse accordingly. Leaving out the starting-note in both tunes has, I think, an effect that no regularity could counterbalance the want of.

Try *O Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch.*
 O Lassie wi' the lint-white
 and locks.
 compare *Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch.*
 with *Lassie wi' the lint-white locks.*

Does not the tameness of the prefixed syllable strike you? In the last case, with the true fervour of genius, you strike at once into the wild originality of the air; whereas, in the first insipid method, it is like the grating screw of the pins before the fiddle is brought into tune. This is my taste; if I am wrong, I beg pardon of the *cognoscenti*.

"The Caledonian Hunt" is so charming that it would make any subject in a song go down; but pathos is certainly its native tongue. Scottish Bacchanalians we certainly want, though the few we have are excellent. For instance, "Todlin' Hame" is, for wit and humour, an unparalleled composition; and "Andrew and his Cutty Gun" is the work of a master. By the way, are you not quite vexed to think that those men of genius, for such they certainly were, who composed our fine Scottish lyrics, should be unknown? It has given me many a headache. Apropos to Bacchanalian songs in Scottish, I composed one yesterday, for an air I like much—"Lumps o' pudding." [See "Contented wi' Little."]

If you do not relish the air, I will send it to Johnson. R. B.

LXI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

SINCE yesterday's penmanship, I have framed a couple of English stanzas, by way of an English song to "Roy's Wife." You will allow me that, in this instance, my English corresponds in sentiment with the

Scottish. [See "Canst thou leave me thus, my Katie?"]

Well! I think this, to be done in two or three turns across my room, and with two or three pinches of Irish blackguard, is not so far amiss. You see I am determined to have my quantum of applause from somebody.

Tell my friend Allan (for I am sure that we only want the trifling circumstance of being known to one another to be the best friends on earth) that I much suspect he has, in his plates, mistaken the figure of the stock and horn. I have at last gotten one; but it is a very rude instrument: it is composed of three parts; the stock, which is the hinder thigh-bone of a sheep, such as you see in a mutton-ham; the horn, which is a common Highland cow's horn, cut off at the smaller end, until the aperture be large enough to admit the stock to be pushed up through the horn, until it be held by the thicker end of the thigh-bone; and lastly, an oaten reed, exactly cut and notched like that which you see every shepherd boy have, when the corn stems are green and full-grown. The reed is not made fast in the bone, but is held by the lips, and plays loose in the smaller end of the stock; while the stock, with the horn hanging on its larger end, is held by the hands in playing. The stock has six or seven ventiges on the upper side, and one back ventige, like the common flute. This of mine was made by a man from the braes of Athole, and is exactly what the shepherds were wont to use in that country.

However, either it is not quite properly bored in the holes, or else we have not the art of blowing it rightly; for we can make little of it. If Mr. Allan chooses, I will send him a sight of mine; as I look on myself to be a kind of brother-brush with him. "Pride in poets is nae sin," and, I will say it, that I look on

Mr. Allan and Mr. Burns to be the only genuine and real painters of Scottish costume in the world.

R. B.

LXII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *Nov. 29, 1794.*

I ACKNOWLEDGE, my dear Sir, you are not only the most punctual, but the most delectable, correspondent I ever met with. To attempt flattering you never entered my head; the truth is, I look back with surprise at my imprudence, in so frequently nibbling at lines and couplets of your incomparable lyrics, for which, perhaps, if you had served me right, you would have sent me to the devil. On the contrary, however, you have, all along, condescended to invite my criticism with so much courtesy that it ceases to be wonderful if I have sometimes given myself the airs of a reviewer. Your last budget demands unqualified praise: all the songs are charming, but the duet is a *chef-d'œuvre*. "Lumps of pudding" shall certainly make one of my family dishes: you have cooked it so capitally that it will please all palates. Do give us a few more of this cast, when you find yourself in good spirits; these convivial songs are more wanted than those of the amorous kind, of which we have great choice. Besides, one does not often meet with a singer capable of giving the proper effect to the latter, while the former are easily sung, and acceptable to everybody. I participate in your regret that the authors of some of our best songs are unknown: it is provoking to every admirer of genius.

I mean to have a picture painted from your beautiful ballad, "The Soldier's Return," to be engraved for one of my frontispieces. The most interesting point of time appears to me, when she recognises her ain

dear Willy, "She gazed, she reddened like a rose." The three lines immediately following are, no doubt, more impressive on the reader's feelings; but were the painter to fix on these, then you'll observe the animation and anxiety of her countenance is gone, and he could only represent her fainting in her soldier's arms. But I submit the matter to you, and beg your opinion.

Allan desires me to thank you for your accurate description of the stock and horn, and for the very gratifying compliment you pay him, in considering him worthy of standing in a niche, by the side of Burns, in the Scottish Pantheon. He has seen the rude instrument you describe, so does not want you to send it; but wishes to know whether you believe it to have ever been generally used as a musical pipe by the Scottish shepherds, and when, and in what part of the country chiefly. I doubt much if it was capable of anything but routing and roaring. A friend of mine says, he remembers to have heard one in his younger days (made of wood instead of your bone), and that the sound was abominable.

Do not, I beseech you, return any books.

G. T.

LXIII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Dec. 1794.

It is, I assure you, the pride of my heart to do anything to forward, or add to the value of, your book; and, as I agree with you that the Jacobite song in the *Museum*, to "There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame," would not so well consort with Peter Pindar's excellent love song to that air, I have just framed for you the following—"My Nanie's awa."]

How does this please you?—As to the point of time for the expression, in your proposed print from my

"Soger's Return," it must certainly be at—"She gazed." The interesting dubiety and suspense taking possession of her countenance, and the gushing fondness, with a mixture of roguish playfulness in his, strike me as things of which a master will make a great deal.—In great haste, but in great truth, yours,
R. B.

LXIV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Jan. 1795.

I FEAR for my songs; however, a few may please, yet originality is a coy feature in composition, and in a multiplicity of efforts in the same style, disappears altogether. For these three thousand years, we poetic folks have been describing the spring, for instance; and, as the spring continues the same, there must soon be a sameness in the imagery, &c., of these said rhyming folks.

A great critic (Aikin) on songs says that love and wine are the exclusive themes for song-writing. The following is on neither subject, and consequently is no song; but will be allowed, I think, to be two or three pretty good prose thoughts, inverted into rhyme—[See "Is there for honest poverty."]

I do not give you the foregoing song for your book, but merely by way of *vive la bagatelle*; for the piece is not really poetry. How will the following do for "Craigieburn Wood?" [See "Sweet fa's the eve on Craigieburn."]

Farewell! God bless you.

R. B.

LXV.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *Jan. 30, 1795.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I thank you heartily for "Nanie's awa," as well as for

"Craigieburn," which I think a very comely pair. Your observation on the difficulty of original writing in a number of efforts, in the same style, strikes me very forcibly; and it has again and again excited my wonder to find you continually surmounting this difficulty, in the many delightful songs you have sent me. Your *vive la bagatelle* song, "For a' that," shall undoubtedly be included in my list.
G. T.

LXVI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Feb. 1795.

HERE is another trial at your favourite air. [See "O Lassie, are ye sleeping yet?"]

I do not know whether it will do.

R. B.

LXVII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

ECCLEFECHAN, *Feb. 7, 1795.*

MY DEAR THOMSON,

You cannot have any idea of the predicament in which I write to you. In the course of my duty as supervisor (in which capacity I have acted of late), I came yesternight to this unfortunate, wicked, little village. I have gone forward, but snows, of ten feet deep, have impeded my progress: I have tried to "gae back the gate I cam again," but the same obstacle has shut me up within insuperable bars. To add to my misfortune, since dinner, a scraper has been torturing catgut, in sounds that would have insulted the dying agonies of a sow under the hands of a butcher, and thinks himself, on that very account, exceeding good company. In fact, I have been in a dilemma, either to get drunk, to forget these miseries; or to hang myself, to get rid of them: like a prudent man (a character congenial to my every thought, word,

and deed), I, of two evils, have chosen the least, and am very drunk, at your service!

I wrote you yesterday from Dumfries. I had not time then to tell you all I wanted to say; and, Heaven knows, at present I have not capacity.

Do you know an air—I am sure you must know it—"We'll gang nae mair to yon town?" I think, in slowish time, it would make an excellent song. I am highly delighted with it; and if you should think it worthy of your attention, I have a fair dame in my eye, to whom I would consecrate it.

As I am just going to bed, I wish you a good night. R. B.

LXVIII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *Feb. 25, 1795.*

I HAVE to thank you, my dear Sir, for two epistles, one containing "Let me in this ae night"; and the other from Ecclefechan, proving that, drunk or sober, your "mind is never muddy." You have displayed great address in the above song. Her answer is excellent, and at the same time takes away the indelicacy that otherwise would have attached to his entreaties. I like the song as it now stands, very much.

I had hopes you would be arrested some days at Ecclefechan, and be obliged to beguile the tedious forenoons by song-making. It will give me pleasure to receive the verses you intend for "O wat ye wha's in yon town."

G. T.

LXIX.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

May 1795.

LET me know, your very first leisure, how you like this song—["Address to the Woodlark."]

How do you like the foregoing? ["On Chloris being ill."] The Irish air, "Humours of Glen," is a great favourite of mine, and as, except the silly stuff in the "Poor soldier," there are not any decent verses for it, I have written for it as follows—[See the song entitled, "Caledonia," and "'Twas na her bonnie blue e'e," which accompanied the three former.]

Let me hear from you. R. B.

LXX.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

May 1795.

You must not think, my good Sir, that I have any intention to enhance the value of my gift, when I say, in justice to the ingenious and worthy artist, that the design and execution of the "Cotter's Saturday Night" is, in my opinion, one of the happiest productions of Allan's pencil. I shall be grievously disappointed if you are not quite pleased with it.

The figure intended for your portrait I think strikingly like you, as far as I can remember your phiz. This should make the piece interesting to your family every way. Tell me whether Mrs. Burns finds you out among the figures.

I cannot express the feeling of admiration with which I have read your pathetic "Address to the Woodlark," your elegant panegyric on "Caledonia," and your affecting verses on "Chloris's illness." Every repeated perusal of these gives new delight. The other song, to "Laddie, lie near me," though not equal to these, is very pleasing. G. T.

LXXI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

May 9, 1795.

WELL! this is not amiss. You see how I answer your orders. [The

poet had enclosed the two songs, "How cruel are thy parents," and "Mark yonder Pomp." Your tailor could not be more punctual. I am just now in a high fit for poetising, provided that the strait jacket of criticism don't cure me. If you can in a post or two administer a little of the intoxicating potion of your applause, it will raise your humble servant's phrenzy to any height you want. I am at this moment "holding high converse" with the Muses, and have not a word to throw away on such a prosaic dog as you are.

R. B.

LXXII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

May 1795.

TEN thousand thanks for your elegant present; though I am ashamed of the value of it being bestowed on a man who has not by any means merited such an instance of kindness. I have shown it to two or three judges of the first abilities here, and they all agree with me in classing it as a first-rate production. My phiz is sae kenspeckle that the very joiner's apprentice whom Mrs. Burns employed to break up the parcel (I was out of town that day) knew it at once. My most grateful compliments to Allan, who has honoured my rustic muse so much with his masterly pencil. One strange coincidence is, that the little one who is making the felonious attempt on the cat's tail, is the most striking likeness of an ill-deedie, damn'd, wee, rumble-gairie urchin of mine, whom, from that propensity to witty wickedness and mantu' mischief, which, even at twa days' auld, I foresaw would form the striking features of his disposition, I named Willie Nicol; after a certain friend of mine who is one of the masters

of a grammar school in a city which shall be nameless.

Give the enclosed epigram to my much-valued friend Cunningham, and tell him that on Wednesday I go to visit a friend of his, to whom his friendly partiality in speaking of me in a manner introduced me—I mean a well-known military and literary character, Colonel Dirom.

You do not tell me how you liked my two last songs. Are they condemned?

R. B.

LXXIII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, May 13, 1795.

It gives me great pleasure to find that you are all so well satisfied with Mr. Allan's production. The chance resemblance of your little fellow, whose promising disposition appeared so very early, and suggested whom he should be named after, is curious enough. I am acquainted with that person, who is a prodigy of learning and genius, and a pleasant fellow, though no saint.

You really make me blush when you tell me you have not merited the drawing from me. I do not think I can ever repay you, or sufficiently esteem and respect you, for the liberal and kind manner in which you have entered into the spirit of my undertaking, which could not have been perfected without you. So I beg you would not make a fool of me again, by speaking of obligation.

I like your two last songs very much, and am happy to find you are in such a high fit of poetising. Long may it last! Clarke has made a fine pathetic air to Mallet's superlative ballad of "William and Margaret," and is to give it to me, to be enrolled among the elect.

G. T.

LXXIV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Aug. 1795.

IN "Whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad," the iteration of that line is tiresome to my ear. Here goes what I think is an improvement:—

O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad,
O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad;
Though father, and mother, and a' should
gae mad,
Thy Jeanie will venture wi' ye, my lad.

In fact, a fair dame, at whose shrine I, the Priest of the Nine, offer up the incense of Parnassus; a dame whom the Graces have attired in witchcraft, and whom the Loves have armed with lightning; a fair one, herself the heroine of the song, insists on the amendment, and dispute her commands if you dare! [See the song entitled, "This is no my ain lassie," which the poet enclosed.]

Do you know that you have roused the torpidity of Clarke at last? He has requested me to write three or four songs for him, which he is to set to music himself. The enclosed sheet contains two songs for him, which please to present to my valued friend, Cunningham.

I enclose the sheet open, both for your inspection, and that you may copy the song "Oh, bonie was yon rosy brier." I do not know whether I am right; but that song pleases me, and, as it is extremely probable that Clarke's newly-roused celestial spark will be soon smothered in the fogs of indolence, if you like the song, it may go as Scottish verses to the air of "I wish my love was in a mire"; and poor Erskine's English lines may follow. R. B.

LXXXV.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, August 3, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,

This will be delivered to you

by a Dr. Brianton, who has read your works, and pants for the honour of your acquaintance. I do not know the gentleman; but his friend, who applied to me for this introduction, being an excellent young man, I have no doubt he is worthy of all acceptance.

My eyes have just been gladdened, and my mind feasted, with your last packet—full of pleasant things indeed. What an imagination is yours! It is superfluous to tell you that I am delighted with all the three songs, as well as with your elegant and tender verses to Chloris.

I am sorry you should be induced to alter "O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad," to the prosaic line, "Thy Jeanie will venture wi' ye, my lad." I must be permitted to say that I do not think the latter either reads or sings so well as the former. I wish, therefore, you would, in my name, petition the charming Jeanie, whoever she be, to let the line remain unaltered.

I should be happy to see Mr. Clarke produce a few airs to be joined to your verses.—Everybody regrets his writing so very little, as everybody acknowledges his ability to write well. Pray, was the resolution formed coolly before dinner, or was it a midnight vow, made over a bowl of punch with the bard?

I shall not fail to give Mr. Cunningham what you have sent him.

G. T.

LXXVI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

How do you like the foregoing? ["Forlorn, my love, no comfort near."] I have written it within this hour: so much for the speed of my Pegasus; but what say you to his bottom?

R. B.

LXXVII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

[*This letter contained "Last May a braw Wooer," and the fragment beginning "Why, why, tell thy lover."*]

Such is the peculiarity of the rhythm of this air, ["Caledonian Hunt's Delight,"] that I find it impossible to make another stanza to suit it.

I am at present quite occupied with the charming sensations of the toothache, so have not a word to spare.

R. B.

LXXVIII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your English verses to "Let me in this ae night," are tender and beautiful; and your ballad to the "Lothian Lassie" is a masterpiece for its humour and *naïveté*. The fragment of the "Caledonian Hunt" is quite suited to the original measure of the air, and, as it plagues you so, the fragment must content it. I would rather, as I said before, have had Bacchanalian words, had it so pleased the poet; but, nevertheless, for what we have received, Lord, make us thankful! G. T.

LXXIX.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, Feb. 5, 1796.

O Robb Burns, are ye sleeping yet?
O, aye wauking, I would wit?

THE pause you have made, my dear Sir, is awful! Am I never to hear from you again? I know and I lament how much you have been afflicted of late, but I trust that returning health and spirits will now enable you to resume the pen, and delight us with your musings.

I have still about a dozen Scotch and Irish airs that I wish "married to immortal verse." We have several true-born Irishmen on the Scottish list; but they are now naturalised and reckoned our own good subjects: indeed, we have none better. I believe I before told you that I had been much urged by some friends to publish a collection of all our favourite airs and songs in octavo, embellished with a number of etchings by our ingenious friend Allan: what is your opinion of this? G. T.

[*Burns had made a pause in his correspondence from August 1795 to February 1796; and Thomson, feeling alarm, as much for the poet's sake as for the "dosen of Scotch and Irish airs" which he wished "wedded to immortal verse," wrote to make inquiries.*]

LXXX.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Feb. 17, 1796.

MANY thanks, my dear Sir, for your handsome, elegant present to Mrs. Burns, and for my remaining volume of Peter Pindar.—Peter is a delightful fellow, and a first favourite of mine. I am much pleased with your idea of publishing a collection of our songs in octavo, with etchings. I am extremely willing to lend every assistance in my power. The Irish airs I shall cheerfully undertake the task of finding verses for.

I have, already, you know, equipt three with words, and the other day I strung up a kind of rhapsody to another Hibernian melody, which I admire much. [See "Hey for a lass wi' a tocher."]

If this will do, you have now four of my Irish engagement. In my by-past songs, I dislike one thing; the name Chloris—I meant it as the fictitious name of a certain lady;

but, on second thoughts, it is a high incongruity to have a Greek appellation to a Scottish pastoral ballad. Of this, and some things else, in my next: I have more amendments to propose.—What you once mentioned of “flaxen locks” is just: they cannot enter into an elegant description of beauty.—Of this also again—God bless you! R. B.

LXXXI.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Feb. 1796.

YOUR “Hey for a lass wi’ a tocher,” is a most excellent song, and with you the subject is something new indeed. It is the first time I have seen you debasing the god of soft desire into an amateur of acres and guineas.

I am happy to find you approve of my proposed octavo edition. Allan has designed and etched about twenty plates, and I am to have my choice of them for that work. Independently of the Hogarthian humour with which they abound, they exhibit the character and costume of the Scottish peasantry with inimitable felicity. In this respect, he himself says, they will far exceed the aquatinta plates he did for the “Gentle Shepherd,” because in the etching he sees clearly what he is doing, but not so with the aquatinta, which he could not manage to his mind.

The Dutch boors of Ostade are scarcely more characteristic and natural than the Scottish figures in those etchings.

G. T.

LXXXII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

April 1796.

ALAS! my dear Thomson, I fear it will be some time ere I tune my

lyre again! “By Babel streams I have sat and wept,” almost ever since I wrote you last: I have only known existence by the pressure of the heavy hand of sickness; and have counted time by the repercussions of pain! Rheumatism, cold, and fever, have formed to me a terrible combination. I close my eyes in misery, and open them without hope. I look on the vernal day, and say with poor Fergusson—

“Say, wherefore has an all-indulgent Heaven
Light to the comfortless and wretched given?”

This will be delivered to you by a Mrs. Hyslop, landlady of the Globe Tavern here, which for these many years has been my howff, and where our friend Clarke and I have had many a merry squeeze. I am highly delighted with Mr. Allan’s etchings. “Woo’d and married an’ a’,” is admirable; the grouping is beyond all praise. The expression of the figures, conformable to the story in the ballad, is absolutely faultless perfection. I next admire “Turnimspike.” What I like least is “Jenny said to Jocky.” Besides the female being in her appearance . . . if you take her stooping into the account, she is at least two inches taller than her lover. Poor Cleghorn! I sincerely sympathise with him! Happy am I to think that he yet has a well-grounded hope of health and enjoyment in this world. As for me—but that is a damning subject! R. B.

LXXXIII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

May 4, 1796.

I NEED not tell you, my good Sir, what concern the receipt of your last gave me, and how much I sympathise in your sufferings. But do not, I beseech you, give yourself up to despondency, nor speak the language of despair. The vigour

of your constitution, I trust, will soon set you on your feet again; and then, it is to be hoped, you will see the wisdom and the necessity of taking due care of a life so valuable to your family, to your friends, and to the world.

Trusting that your next will bring agreeable accounts of your convalescence and returning good spirits, I remain, with sincere regard,
yours, G. T.

P.S.—Mrs. Hyslop, I doubt not, delivered the gold seal to you in good condition.

LXXXIV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

May 1796.

MY DEAR SIR,

I once mentioned to you an air which I have long admired, "Here's a health to them that's awa, hinny," but I forget if you took any notice of it. I have just been trying to suit it with verses; and I beg leave to recommend the air to your attention once more. I have only begun it. [See the beautiful song beginning, "Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear."]

R. B.

LXXXV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

May 1796.

THIS will be delivered by a Mr. Lewars, a young fellow of uncommon merit. As he will be a day or two in town, you will have leisure, if you choose, to write me by him; and if you have a spare half hour to spend with him, I shall place your kindness to my account. I have no copies of the songs I have sent you,—and I have taken a fancy

to review them all, and possibly may mend some of them; so, when you have complete leisure, I will thank you either for originals or copies. I had rather be the author of five well-written songs than of ten otherwise. I have great hopes that the genial influence of the approaching summer will set me to rights, but as yet I cannot boast of returning health. I have no reason to believe that my complaint is a flying gout—a d—nable business!

Do let me know how Cleghorn is, and remember me to him.

This should have been delivered to you a month ago. I am still very poorly, but should like much to hear from you.

R. B.

LXXXVI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

BROW, ON THE SOLWAY FIRTH
July 12, 1796.

AFTER all my boasted independence, curst necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. A cruel wretch of a haberdasher, to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process, and will infallibly put me into jail. Do, for God's sake, send me that sum, and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnestness, but the horrors of a jail have made me half distracted. I do not ask all this gratuitously; for, upon returning health, I hereby promise and engage to furnish you with five pounds' worth of the neatest song-genius you have seen. I tried my hand on "Rothiemurichie" this morning. The measure is so difficult that it is impossible to infuse much genius into the lines. They are on the other side. [See the song, "Fairest Maid on Devon Banks."] Forgive, forgive me!

R. B.

LXXXVII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

July 14, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR,

Ever since I received your melancholy letters by Mrs. Hyslop, I have been ruminating in what manner I could endeavour to alleviate your sufferings. Again and again I thought of a pecuniary offer, but the recollection of one of your letters on this subject, and the fear of offending your independent spirit, checked my resolution. I thank you heartily, therefore, for the frankness of your letter of the 12th, and, with great pleasure, enclose a draft for the very sum I proposed sending. Would I were Chancellor of the Exchequer but for one day, for your sake!

Pray, my good Sir, is it not possible

for you to muster a volume of poetry? If too much trouble to you, in the present state of your health, some literary friend might be found here, who would select and arrange from your manuscripts, and take upon him the task of editor. In the meantime it could be advertised to be published by subscription. Do not shun this mode of obtaining the value of your labour: remember Pope published the *Iliad* by subscription. Think of this, my dear Burns, and do not reckon me intrusive with my advice. You are too well convinced of the respect and friendship I bear you, to impute anything I say to an unworthy motive. Yours faithfully,

G. T.

The verses to "Rothiemurchie" will answer finely. I am happy to see you can still tune your lyre.

NOTES.

1. HANDSOME NELL.

INSPIRED by Nelly Kilpatrick, the daughter of a blacksmith near Mount Oliphant, who was the poet's partner in the harvest field in the autumn of 1773, when he was yet under fifteen. This song, apart from its merit, claims interest as being the first that Burns composed. Writing of it in his *First Common Place Book*, under date August 1783, he says, "I never had the least thought or inclination of turning poet till I got once heartily in love, and then rhyme and song were, in a manner, the spontaneous language of my heart. The following was the first of my performances. It is, indeed, very puerile and silly: but I am always pleased with it, as it recalls to my mind those happy days when my heart was yet honest, and my tongue was sincere. The subject of it was a young girl who really deserved all the praises I have bestowed on her; I not only had this opinion of her then, but I actually think so still, now that the spell is long since broken, and the enchantment at an end." Among her other love-inspiring qualities Nelly sang sweetly. One of her songs had been composed by a neighbouring country lad, and Burns thought he too might be able to compose a song. "Handsome Nell" was the result; which, the more effectively to win its subject's favour, was set to her favourite reel tune, "I am a man Unmarried." It has many minute faults, the poet confesses: "but," he concludes, "I remember I composed it in a wild enthusiasm of passion, and to this hour I never recollect it, but my heart melts, and my blood sallies at the remembrance."

2. O TIBBIE, I HAE SEEN THE DAY.

"I composed this song about the age of seventeen," writes the poet: and he offers no further particular.

His sister, Mrs. Begg, however, declared that it celebrates Isabella Stein (or Steven), who lived at Little Hill, a few-acre holding which marched with the Burns family farm of Lochlie, near Tarbolton. Probably it was suggested by an older ditty, "The Saucy Lass with the Beard," preserved in a Falkirk chapbook.

3. THE RUINED FARMER.

Included by the poet in the MS. collection of his pieces which he presented to Mrs. Stewart of Stair, in 1786. This was first printed by Dr. Robert Chambers in 1852. Probably it was written during, as it was very evidently suggested by, the brief period while the poet's father bravely struggled to weather out his hard fate at Mount Oliphant. "The farm proved a ruinous bargain," wrote the poet in his Autobiographical Letter, "and to clench the curse, we fell into the hands of a factor, who sat for the picture I have drawn of one in my 'Tale of Two Dogs.' My father was advanced in life when he married. I was the eldest of seven children, and he, worn out by early hardships, was unfit for labour. There was a freedom in the lease in two years more: and to weather these two years we retrenched expenses."

4. THE TARBOLTON LASSES.

First printed by Chambers in 1851, who, contrary to his custom, does not state where he got the piece, and on what grounds he became satisfied of its authenticity.

5. AH! WOE IS ME, MY MOTHER DEAR.

This song, says Hogg (Hogg and Motherwell Edition, 1835), was composed by Burns "when sitting between the stils of the plough." Chambers and Scott Douglas agree in regarding

it, reasonably, as an early production; but Henley and Henderson contend that its insertion in a 1785 edition of Fergusson affords almost proof positive of a date comparatively late. The more intimate students of Burns will incline to the view of the earlier editors. Referring to his boyhood the poet says, "At those years I was by no means a favourite with anybody." And David Sillar, speaking of Burns in 1781, says, "His social disposition easily procured him acquaintances; but a certain satirical seasoning, while it set the rustic circle in a roar, was not unaccompanied by its kindred attendant—suspicious fear."

6. MONTGOMERIE'S PEGGY.

Inscribed in the *First Common Place Book*,—under date September 1785. "The following fragment," says the poet, "is done something in imitation of the manner of a noble old Scottish piece called 'McMillan's Peggy,' and sings to the tune of 'Galla Water.' My Montgomerie's Peggy [Peggy Thomson] was my Deity for six or eight months. She had been bred, tho' as the world says, without any just pretence for it, in a style of life rather elegant. But as Vanburgh says in one of his comedies, my 'dam'd star found me out' there too, for though I began the affair merely in a *gaieté de cœur*, or, to tell the truth, what would scarcely be believed, a vanity of showing my parts in courtship, particularly my abilities at a *billet doux*, which I always piqued myself upon, made me lay siege to her; and when, as I always do in my foolish gallantries, I had battered myself into a very warm affection for her, she told me one day, in a flag of truce, that her fortress had been for some time before the rightful property of another. I found out afterwards that what she told me of a pre-engagement was really true: but it cost my heart some aches to get rid of the affair." Peggy was housekeeper at Coilsfield—the Castle of Montgomery; and "my brother Robert," says Mrs. Begg, "had met her frequently at Tarboth Mill; they sat in the same church, and contracted an intimacy together, but she was engaged to another before ever they met."

7. THE RONALDS OF THE BENNALS.

Jean and Ann Ronald celebrated here, were the daughters of William Ronald, reputed to be a man of wealth, who owned as well as occupied the farm of the Bennals in the parish of Tarbolton, and about five miles from Lochlie. Jean, the elder, is said to have been a flame of Gilbert Burns, but refused to marry him on account of his poverty. The poet favoured the younger sister, though he did not afford her the boast of refusing him. Old man Ronald, proud of his estate of 200 acres, was evidently no general favourite. Anyway, the poet, in a letter addressed to his brother William, on 10th November, 1789, in which he announces the bankruptcy of Mr. Ronald, adds, "You will easily guess, that from his insolent vanity in the sunshine of life, he will now feel a little retaliation from those who thought themselves eclipsed by him."

8. HERE'S TO THY HEALTH.

Burns sent this, with its sprightly melody, to Johnson, and it appears in the fifth volume of the *Museum* as "Written for this work by Robert Burns." It is not likely, however, that the poet more than revised the verses, as Mrs. Begg affirmed that the song was well known in Ayrshire when her brother was a boy.

9. THE LASS OF CESSNOCK BANKS.

First printed by Cromek, in 1808, "from the oral communication," as he said, "of a lady residing at Glasgow, whom the bard in early life affectionately admired," this "song of similes" was inspired by Ellison (or Alison) Begbie, the daughter of a small farmer in the parish of Galston, who, when the poet made her acquaintance, was serving with a family on the banks of the Cessnock, about two miles from Lochlie. She was not a beauty, the bard admits, but had "many charming qualities, heightened by an education much beyond anything I have ever met in any woman I ever dared to approach." They kept company for a time, but, for reasons nowhere stated, Miss Begbie refused the poet's suit.

10. BONIE PEGGY ALISON.

In Johnson's *Museum*, to which the poet sent it, this is signed Z, signifying that it is an old song with additions. Editors generally are in doubt as to the heroine. Burns himself averred that all his earlier love-songs were the breathings of real passion—a legend of his heart being inscribed on each of them. Mrs. Begg's information regarding her brother's passion for Alison Begbie started the idea that he must have attempted to weave her name into some snatch of song. "Her surname, however, being so prosaic and untuneable," observes Scott Douglas, "what was a poor poet to do? His object could be obtained only by compromise, and that might be accomplished by transposing Alison Begbie into 'Peggy Alison'—a very euphonious by-name indeed."

11. MARY MORISON.

"Of all the productions of Burns," says Hazlitt, "the pathetic and serious love-songs which he has left behind him, in the manner of old ballads, are perhaps those which take the deepest and most lasting hold of the mind. Such are the lines to Mary Morison." But as to who Mary Morison was there has been considerable speculation. The poet, when forwarding the song to Thomson in March 1793, remarks only that it is one of his "juvenile works," and not remarkable either for its merits or demerits. Gilbert Burns, on being asked by Thomson to whom it referred, replied, that Mary Morison was the heroine of some light verses beginning "I'll kiss thee yet, yet," from which it has been inferred that Peggy Alison, Mary Morison, and Alison Begbie were, all three, one and the same. It has been claimed, however, that "lovely Mary Morison," whom the poet admired as a girl of sixteen, was the daughter of Adjutant Morison of Mauchline. The house in which she lived there is still pointed out. And in Mauchline kirk-yard there is a tombstone, erected in 1825, bearing the following inscription, which I have read: "In memory of Adjutant John Morison of the 104th Regiment, who died at Mauchline, 16th

April, 1804, in the 80th year of his age; also his daughter—the poet's bonie Mary Morison—who died 29th June, 1791, aged 20; and his second spouse, Ann Tomlinson, who died 6th September, 1831, aged 76."

12. WINTER: A DIRGE.

Gilbert Burns affirms this to be a "juvenile production." In his *First Common Place Book*, under date April 1784, the poet writes: "There is scarcely any earthly object gives me more—I don't know if I should call it pleasure, but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood, or high plantation, in a cloudy winter day, and hear a stormy wind howling among the trees and raving o'er the plain. It is my best season for devotion; my mind is rapt in a kind of enthusiasm to Him who, in the pompous language of Scripture, 'walks on the wings of the wind.' In one of these seasons, just after a tract of misfortune, I composed the following song." The reference is to "Winter"; and he assigns to it the tune of "Macpherson's Farewell."

13. FICKLE FORTUNE.

This (as well as the two pieces succeeding it in the text), the poet tells, was written "extempore, under the pressure of a heavy train of misfortunes, which, indeed, threatened to undo me altogether."

14. NO CHURCHMAN AM I.

Written evidently in imitation of an old English drinking song. As to the stanza, "added in a Mason lodge," it may be noted that the poet was admitted an apprentice Free Mason in July 1781, just before he proceeded to Irvine.

15. MY FATHER WAS A FARMER.

As inscribed in the *First Common Place Book*, each line of this ballad closes with the letter "O" to make it fit the tune for which it was composed. The poet describes the piece as "a wild rhapsody miserably deficient in versification; but as the sentiments are the

genuine feelings of my heart, for that reason," he says, "I have a particular pleasure in conning it over."

16. JOHN BARLEYCORN: A BALLAD.

This is an improvement merely of an early ballad of English origin, a copy of which was obtained by Robert Jamieson from a black-letter sheet in Pepy's Library, Cambridge, and first published in his ballad collection, issued in 1808. In a note introducing it in his *First Common Place Book*, Burns says: "I once heard the old song, that goes by this name, sung, and being very fond of it, and remembering only two or three verses of it—viz. the 1st, 2d, and 3d, with some scraps, I have interwoven them here and there in the following piece."

17. THE DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF POOR MAILIE.

Carlyle esteems this one of the happiest efforts of its peculiar kind. Gilbert Burns tells how it came to be written. "Robert," he says, "had partly by way of frolic, bought a ewe and two lambs from a neighbour, and she was tethered in a field adjoining the house at Lochlie. He and I were going out with our teams, and our two younger brothers to drive for us, at midday, when Hugh Wilson, a curious-looking, awkward boy, clad in plaidings, came to us with much anxiety in his face, with the information that the ewe had entangled herself in the tether and was lying in the ditch. Robert was much tickled with the ewe's appearance and postures on the occasion. Poor Mailie was set to rights, and, when we returned from the plough in the evening, he repeated to me the 'Death and Dying Words' pretty much in the way they now stand."

18. POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY.

The fact of this not being inscribed in the *First Common Place Book* all but proves that it was composed at a period somewhat later than the "Dying Words." In an early draft of the poem, the MS. of which is in the possession of the heirs of the late Provost Brown of

Paisley, instead of the present sixth stanza, the following stands:—

"She was nae get o' runted rams,
Wi' woo like goats, and legs like trams,
She was the flow'r o' Fairlie lambs—
A famous breed!
Now Robin, greetin', chows the hams
O' Mailie dead!"

And other verses in the MS. copy similarly show how much the piece, as a whole, was improved previous to publication.

19. THE RIGS O' BARLEY.

In an interleaved copy of the *Museum*, Burns remarks that all the old words ever he could meet to this were the following, which seem to have been an old chorus:—

"O corn rigs and rye rigs,
O corn rigs are bonie,
And when'er you meet a bonie lass
Preen up her cockernony."

Ramsay, at an earlier date, in his song "My Patie is a Lover gay," clearly fructified on the same hint. Who the "Annie" celebrated was, has not been settled beyond dispute. Several, it appears, claimed the honour. Anne Ronald has been mentioned. And Anne Rankine, daughter of a farmer at Adamhill, near Lochlie—who became Mrs. Merry—to her dying day, says Scott Douglas, boasted that she was the Annie of the "Rigs o' Barley." She died at Cumnock as late as 1843. A local sculptor was recently desirous to enshrine her epitaph in verse, and he went for an appropriate stanza to Mr. A. B. Todd, the local poet, who evolved these eight lines:—

"Ah, Annie, now how changed thy lot
Since 'mong the corn rigs bonnie
Ye romp'd and ran, a lassie gay,
As blithe and loved as ony.

To thee, like Burns, death came and called,
Nor would he treat or parley,
And here ye spend a long dark night,
Where bloom nae rigs o' barley."

The author says that some of the best and most religious men in the town approved the effort, but a descendant of Annie's refused his sanction, and she lies unsung of at least the later muse.

20. NOW WESTLIN WINDS.

The opening verse of this appears in the *First Common Place Book* under the title, "Har'ste.—A Fragment," and the inference there is that it celebrates Jean Armour. Further, Mrs. Begg told Robert Chambers that she had seen a transcript with the name "Jean" instead of "Peggy," and the word "Armour" instead of "charmer" at the end of the first and fifth verses. In his Autobiographical Letter the poet, however, refers to it as the "ebullition" of his passion for Peggy Thomson, who "overset his trigonometry" at Kirkoswald when he was in his seventeenth year.

21. MY NANIE O.

Composed in the author's twenty-third year, while his father was still living—who, by the bye, expressed his hearty appreciation of it—this song, till 1792, had "Stincher" instead of "Lugar" in the opening line. Writing to Thomson, in the year named, the poet says: "In the printed copy of 'My Nanie O,' the name of the river is horribly prosaic. I will alter it:" and he gave his editor the choice of four streams—Afton, Lugar, Girvan, and Stincher. Thomson, with good taste, preferred Lugar. According to Gilbert Burns it was inspired by the charms of Agnes Fleming, daughter of John Fleming, farmer of Doura, in the parish of Tarbolton. Mrs. Begg, on the other hand, asserted that it was written in honour of Peggy Thomson, of Kirkoswald. Burns's own comment (in the *First Common Place Book*) is simply: "Whether the following song will stand the test, I will not pretend to say, because it is my own: only I can say it was, at the time, real." Originally it had this rather silly chorus:—

"And O my bonny Nanie O,
My young, my handsome Nanie O,
Tho' I had the world all at my will,
I would give it all for Nanie O."

22. GREEN GROW THE RASHES.

This was written to supplant a black-guard old rant with the same title, part of which is preserved in Herd's *Ancient*

and Modern Scottish Songs. As it stands in the *First Common Place Book*, the last stanza—which embraces, perhaps, the finest compliment ever paid to woman-kind in song—is wanting; and the presumption is that the poet added that at a much later date—even in the Ellisland period—having borrowed the conceit from an old comedy play, called *Cupid's Whirligig*, published in 1607.

23. "INDEED WILL I," QUO' FINDLAY.

Cromek states that, according to Gilbert Burns, the poet's model for this piece was "The Auld Man's Best Argument," in Ramsay's *Tea-table Miscellany*, with which an old widow, Jean Wilson, in Tarbolton, used to divert him and his companions by singing, with great effect:—

"O, wha's that at my chamber-door?
Fair widow, are you wauking?
Auld carle, your suit give o'er,
Your love lyes a' in tawking."

But there seems almost no reason for doubting that Burns's original (as Henley and Henderson point out) was "Who But I, quoth Finlay"—"a new song, much in request, sung with its own proper tune"—of which there is a copy in the Laing Collection at Dalmeny.

24. EPITAPH ON A CELEBRATED
RULING ELDER.

In the Kilmarnock Edition the elder's name is indicated merely by asterisks. But in the *First Common Place Book*, where it appears under date, April 1784, the heading is "Epitaph on William Hood, senior, in Tarbolton." Hood, it appears, had provoked the poet by his extreme penuriousness.

25. EPITAPH ON MY EVER-HONOURED
FATHER.

William Burness (thus the older Burns always spelt his name) died at Lochlie, 13th February, 1784, and this tender yet noble tribute to his memory, from the pen of his ever-devoted son, is engraved on the humble stone which marks his grave in Alloway kirkyard. John Murdoch, the poet's schoolmaster, referring to the elder Burns, said: "I have often wished, for the good of mankind, that it were as customary to

honour and perpetuate the memory of those who excel in moral rectitude, as it is to extol what are called heroic actions. Then would the mausoleum of the friend of my youth overtop and surpass most of those we see in Westminster Abbey."

The piece is recorded by the poet in his *First Common Place Book*, under date, April 1784. And instead of the opening line in the text, he has there written :—

"O ye who sympathise with virtue's pains ;"

which apparently not being satisfied with, he suggests, at the foot of the page, as a substitute for it :—

"O ye whose hearts deceased merit pains."

The improvement effected afterwards, as will be seen, is very striking.

26. BALLAD ON THE AMERICAN WAR.

Composed at a period when the poet's political opinions, as Dr. Blair remarks, still "smelt of the smithy." The Earl of Glencairn and Mr. Erskine, Dean of Faculty, who were applied to for their opinion, nevertheless, seem to have approved of the insertion of the piece in the Edinburgh Edition. The numerous personal allusions it contains are not now matter of particular interest.

27. REPLY TO AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY JOHN RANKINE.

The person addressed here is the "rough, rude, ready-witted Rankine," to whom also the succeeding "Epistle" in the text was written. The expression in the last line—"a whaup's i' the nest"—has reference to the delicate condition of Elizabeth Paton, for some time a servant at Lochlie.

28. A POET'S WELCOME TO HIS LOVE-BEGOTTEN DAUGHTER.

The welcome here—"generous and delightful," as Henley and Henderson call it—was to the child of Elizabeth Paton, mentioned in the preceding note, and who in her later years was widely known as "Betty Burns." Born in November, 1784, she was taken home by her father to Mossiel; and, after his marriage, she remained under the charge of the poet's mother and his brother Gilbert. At the age of twenty-

one, when she was married to John Bishop, overseer at Polkemmet, Betty, who well deserved the recognition, received £200, as a marriage portion, out of the fund that was publicly subscribed for the widow and children of the bard. Her portrait, exposed in the recent Burns Exhibition in Glasgow, was the subject of frequent comment, in that it showed how the "bonie lady" more strikingly resembled her father than any of the children born to him in wedlock.

29. THE MAUCHLINE LADY.

The reference is doubtless to Jean Armour, whom the poet first met in 1784, soon after his removal with Gilbert and his mother to the farm of Mossiel.

30. THE BELLES OF MAUCHLINE.

"For the sake of the interest involved in whatever interested Burns," says Scott Douglas, "the after-history of the 'six proper young belles,' catalogued by him in this little piece, has been devoutly traced and recorded. Miss Helen Miller married Burns's friend, Dr. Mackenzie. The 'divine' Miss Markland was married to Mr. James Findlay, an officer of Excise, first at Tarbolton and afterwards at Greenock. The witty Miss Jean Smith bestowed herself upon Mr. James Candlish, who, like Findlay, was a friend of Burns. The 'braw' Miss Betty Miller became Mrs. Templeton; she was sister of Miss Helen Miller, and died early in life. Miss Morton gave her 'beauty and fortune' to Mr. Paterson, a merchant in Mauchline. Of Armour's history, Immortality has taken charge. The last survivor died in January, 1854; she was mother of the Rev. Dr. Candlish of Edinburgh, who was laid beside his parents in Old Calton, Edinburgh, in October, 1873." Further, about "Miss Betty" it may be remarked that she claimed to be the "Eliza" of the poet's early song—"From thee, Eliza, I must go."

30A. EPITAPH ON A NOISY POLEMIC.

Directed at James Humphrey, a mason in Mauchline, well known locally for his tendency to debate on matters of Church doctrine. "He used to hint,"

says Scott Douglas, "that the poet satirised him in revenge for being beaten by Humphrey in an argument. He died in 1844, at the advanced age of eighty-six, an inmate of Faile poor-house; and many an alms-offering he earned in consequence of Burns's epitaph." It became the open boast of Humphrey, indeed, that he was "Burns's bletherin' b—h."

31. MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN.

"Several of the poems," says Gilbert Burns, "were produced for the purpose of bringing forward some favourite sentiment of the author's. He used to remark to me that he could not well conceive a more mortifying picture of human life than a man seeking work. In casting about in his mind how this sentiment might be brought forward, the elegy, 'Man was Made to Mourn,' was composed." An old Scottish ballad had suggested the spirit as well as the form of the poem. "I had an old grand-uncle," writes the poet in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, "with whom my mother lived while in her girlish years. The good old man was long blind ere he died, during which time his highest enjoyment was to sit down and cry while my mother would sing the simple old song of 'The Life and Age of Man.'" Cromek procured a copy of this. The first verse runs:—

"Upon the sixteen hundred year
Of God and fifty-three
Frae Christ was born, who bought us dear,
As writings testify:
On January the sixteenth day,
As I did lie alone,
With many a sigh and sob did say,
Ah, man was made to moan!"

32. THE TWA HERDS; OR, THE HOLY TULYIE.

Written probably in 1784, this has been printed at various times, since 1799, under the various headings of "The Twa Herds," "The Holy Tulyie," and "An Unco Mournfu' Tale." The "herds" were the Rev. John Russell, assistant minister of Kilmarnock, afterwards minister at Stirling, and the Rev. Alexander Moodie, parish minister of Riccarton, two zealous "Auld Licht" preachers, and, as such, members of

the clerical party to whom Burns was opposed on all occasions. They had quarrelled over some question of parish boundaries, and in the Presbytery, where the question had come up for settlement, they fell foul of each other in quite an extraordinary way. "In the open court," says Lockhart, "to which the announcement of the discussion had drawn a multitude of the country people, and Burns among the rest, the reverend divines, and hitherto sworn friends and associates, lost all command of temper, and abused each other *coram populo* with a fiery virulence of personal invective such as has long been banished from all popular assemblies wherein the laws of courtesy are enforced by those of a certain unwritten Code." In justice to the poet it deserves to be mentioned that the piece was not allowed to appear in any edition of his poems printed during his lifetime.

33. EPISTLE TO DAVIE, A BROTHER POET.

David Sillar, the son of a small farmer near Tarbolton. His poems—still of interest to the curious reader, and particularly so to students of Burns—appeared in a volume printed in 1789. Burns, then at Ellisland, helped to his utmost in procuring subscribers.

34. HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.

The subject of this "amazing achievement in satire," William Fisher by name, was the son of Andrew Fisher, farmer at Montgarswood. Born in 1738, he succeeded his father, and afterwards tenanted the farm of Tongue-in-Auchterless. In July, 1772, he was ordained an elder in the parish church of Mauchline, and became one of the most strenuous of "Daddy Auld's" assistants in his rigid surveillance of the parishioners. Willie was, indeed, a great pretender to sanctity, and a punctilious stickler for outward observances; though, poor man, he unfortunately merited the satire of the poet, for, in 1790, he was rebuked by the minister, in presence of the kirk-session, for drunkenness; and later was accused,

if not actually convicted, of utilising his opportunities as "elder at the plate" in making free with the church funds. Burns himself, in a preface to the *Glenriddell* Book, explains thus the occasion of the poem: "Holy Willie was a rather oldish bachelor elder, in the parish of Mauchline, and much and justly famed for that polemical chattering which ends in tippling orthodoxy, and for that spiritualised bawdry which refines to liquorish devotion. In a sessional process with a gentleman in Mauchline—a Mr. Gavin Hamilton—'Holy Willie' and his priest, Father Auld, after full hearing in the Presbytery of Ayr, came off but second best, owing partly to the oratorical powers of Mr. Robert Aiken, Mr. Hamilton's counsel; but chiefly to Mr. Hamilton's being one of the most irreproachable characters in the country. On losing his process, the Muse overheard him at his devotions." Hamilton—Burns's good friend ever, and a generous-hearted and upright man—had been denied the ordinances of the Church because he was alleged to have made a journey on the Sabbath-day; because he habitually, if not totally, neglected the worship of God in his family; and made one of his servants bring in some potatoes from the garden on a Sunday—hence the allusion to "kail and potatoes" in the poem. Fisher, it need only further be told, returning from Mauchline late one night after a debauch, in February, 1809, fell in a ditch by the roadside, and perished in the snow. The piece first appeared in one of Stewart and Meikle's tracts, in 1799.

35. DEATH AND DOCTOR HORNBOOK.

"Though not published in the Kilmarnock Edition," says Gilbert Burns, "'Death and Doctor Hornbook' was produced early in the year 1785. The schoolmaster of Tarbolton parish, to eke out the scanty subsistence allowed to that useful class of men, set up a shop of grocery goods. Having accidentally fallen in with some medical books, and become most hobby-horsically attached to the study of medicine, he had added the sale of a few medicines

to his little store. He had got a shop-bill printed, and overlooking his own incapacity, he had advertised that advice would be given, in common disorders, at the shop, gratis. Robert was at a Mason-meeting at Tarbolton, when the dominie made a too ostentatious display of his medical skill. As he parted in the evening from this mixture of pedantry and physic, at the place where he describes his meeting with Death, one of those floating ideas of apparitions mentioned in his letter to Dr. Moore crossed his mind; this set him to work for the rest of his way home. These circumstances he related to me when he recited the verses to me the next afternoon, as I was holding the plough, and he was letting the water off the field beside me." "Hornbook's" real name was John Wilson. Burns had no personal enmity towards him. The mirth and talk, however, occasioned by the circulation of the verses drove the poor dominie out of the district. He removed to Glasgow, where he prospered so, that for many years he held the responsible and fairly lucrative post of session-clerk for the Gorbals parish. He died in 1839, and many a time in his latter days, says Scott Douglas, he was heard over a bowl of punch to bless the lucky hour when, as dominie of Tarbolton, he provoked the castigation of Robert Burns.

36. EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK.

Nearly sixty years old when Burns sought acquaintance of him, this rustic follower of the Muses, and "very worthy and facetious old fellow," as he has been described, inherited, through a line of ancestors, a small croft near Muirkirk, which little property he was obliged to sell in consequence of becoming security for some persons concerned in "that villainous bubble, the Ayr Bank." Born in 1728, he died in 1807. The song ascribed to him, and praised by the poet in the third stanza of his "Epistle"—"When I upon thy Bosom Lean"—has been proved as not Lapraik's at all, however, though he claimed it, but was a piece he had discovered in an old magazine—

Ruddiman's Weekly, for 14th October, 1773—which, by altering slightly, he had palmed off as his own composition. It appears yet in the volume of Lapraik's *Poems on Several Occasions*, issued at Kilmarnock in 1788.

37. RANTIN, ROVIN ROBIN.

We have surely in this excellent and widely-esteemed lyric, as Dr. Hately Waddell observes, a very singular and truthful anticipation of the poet's own future greatness. That the poet was himself the hero of the song is beyond doubt: though in the *Second Common Place Book*, curiously, "Davie" appears instead of "Robin," and the chorus there is that of the old song "Dainty Davie." The first verse runs:—

"There was a birkie born in Kyle,
But whatna day o' whatna style,
I doubt it's hardly worth the while
To be like nice wi' Davie.

Leeze me on thy curly pow,
Bonnie Davie, dainty Davie!
Leeze me on thy curly pow,
Thou'se ay my dainty Davie."

Of the amended version the concluding verse—seldom printed—runs:—

"Guid faith," quo' scho, "I doubt you, sir.
Ye gar the lasses lie aspar:
But twenty fauts ye may hae waur,
So blessins on thee! Robin"

38. ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT RUISSAUX.

Again the poet writes of himself. "Ruisseaux" being the French for "brooks" (i.e., "burns"), the term is but an innocent play on his own name. The piece—incribed in the *Second Common Place Book*—was first printed by Cromek, in 1808.

39. EPISTLE TO JOHN GOLDIE, IN KILMARNOCK.

A wine-merchant, who, from being an Anti-burgher in 1779, lapsed into Arminianism, and in his sixty-third year published an exposition of his religious views under the elaborate title of *Essays on Various Important Subjects, Moral and Divine: being an Attempt to distinguish True from False Religion*. The book became popularly known as

Goudie's Bible. It was widely read; and the issue of a second edition, in six volumes, in 1785, furnished the occasion for the poet's "Epistle."

40. EPISTLE TO THE REV. JOHN M'MATH.

Assistant and successor to the Rev. Peter Wodrow, minister in Tarbolton ("auld Wodrow" and his helper, M'Math, are both complimented in "The Twa Herds"). He was an able preacher of the "New Licht" tendency: but in course of years he fell into a morbid condition of mind, became dissipated, resigned his charge, enlisted as a common soldier, and died in obscurity in the Isle of Mull, in 1825.

41. YOUNG PEGGY.

Miss Peggy Kennedy, the daughter of a Carrick laird, and niece of Gavin Hamilton, a pathetic incident in whose life at a later period is said to have inspired "The Banks o' Doon."

42. FAREWELL TO BALLOCHMYLE.

In Johnson's *Museum*, Vol. III., with the note, "Written for this work by Robert Burns." "I composed the verses," says the poet, "on the amiable and excellent family of Whitefoord leaving Ballochmyle, when Sir John's misfortunes had obliged him to sell the estate." The "Maria" of the song was Sir John's daughter, who became Mrs. Cranstoun. The "Catrine Woods" and "Catrine Lee" are in the immediate neighbourhood of Ballochmyle, and were then the property of Professor Dugald Stewart, of Edinburgh University.

43. HALLOWE'EN.

In a prefatory note to this more than national poem, the author himself says: "The following poem will, by many readers, be well enough understood; but for the sake of those who are unacquainted with the manners and customs of the country where the scene is cast, notes are added to give some account of the principal charms and spells of that night, so big with prophecy to the peasantry in the west

of Scotland. The passion of prying into futurity makes a striking part of the history of human nature in its rude state, in all ages and nations; and it may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind, if any such should honour the author with a perusal, to see the remains of it among the more unenlightened in our own." Of Hallowe'en itself he says it is "thought to be a night when witches, devils, and other mischief-making beings are all abroad on their baneful midnight errands; particularly these aerial people, the fairies, are said on that night to hold a grand anniversary."

- a. Certain little, romantic, rocky, green hills in the neighbourhood of the ancient seat of the Earls of Cassilis.—R. B.
- b. A noted cavern near Colean House, called the Cove of Colean; which, as well as Cassilis Downans, is famed, in the country, for being a favourite haunt of the fairies.—R. B.
- c. The famous family of that name; the ancestors of ROBERT, the great deliverer of his country, were Earls of Carrick.—R. B.
- d. The first ceremony of Hallowe'en is, pulling each a "stock," or plant of kail. They must go out, hand in hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet with: its being big or little, straight or crooked, is prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the husband or wife. If any "yird," or earth, stick to the root, that is "tocher," or fortune; and the taste of the "custoc," that is, the heart of the stems, is indicative of the natural temper and disposition. Lastly, the stems, or, to give them their proper appellations, the "runts," are placed somewhere above the head of the door; and the Christian names of people whom chance brings into the house are, according to the priority of placing the "runts," the names in question.—R. B.
- e. They go to the barnyard, and pull each, at three several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the "top-pickle," that is, the grain at the top of the stalk, the party in question will come to the marriage-bed anything but a maid.—R. B.
- f. When the corn is in a doubtful state, by being too green or wet, the stack-builder, by means of old timber, etc., makes a large apartment in his stack, with an opening in the side which is fairest exposed to the wind; this is called a "fause-house."—R. B.
- g. Burning the nuts is a favourite charm. They name the lad and lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire; and according as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be.—R. B.
- h. Whoever would, with success, try this spell, must strictly observe these directions:—Steal out, all alone, to the kiln, and, darkling, throw into the "pot" a clue of blue yarn; wind it on a new clue off the old one; and, towards the latter end, something will hold the thread; demand "Wha hauds?" (*i.e.*, Who holds?) and answer will be returned from the kiln-pot, by naming the Christian and surname of your future spouse.—R. B.
- i. Take a candle and go alone to a looking-glass: eat an apple, before it, and, some traditions say, you should comb your hair all the time: the face of your conjugal companion, *to be*, will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder.—R. B.
- j. A technical term in female scolding.—R. B.
- k. Steal out, unperceived, and sow a handful of hemp-seed, harrowing it with anything you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat, now and then—"Hemp-seed I saw thee, hemp-seed I saw thee; and him (or her) that is to be my true love, come after me and pou thee." Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person invoked, in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say, "Come after me and shaw thee," that is, show thyself; in which case, it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, "Come after me and harrow thee."—R. B.
- l. This charm must likewise be performed unperceived and alone. You go to the barn, and open both doors, taking them off the hinges if possible; for there is danger that the being about to appear may shut the doors, and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which in our country dialect we call a "wecht," and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind. Repeat it three times, and the third time an apparition will pass through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or retinue, marking the employment or station in life.—R. B.
- m. Take an opportunity of going unnoticed to a "bear-stack," and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time, you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yoke-fellow.—R. B.
- n. You go out, one or more (for this is a social spell), to a south running spring, or rivulet, where "three lairds' lands meet," and dip your left shirt-sleeve. Go to bed in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake, and, some time near midnight, an apparition, having the exact figure of the grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve, as if to dry the other side of it.—R. B.
- o. Take three dishes, put clean water in one, foul water in another, and leave the third empty: blindfold a person, and lead him to the hearth where the dishes are ranged; he (or she) dips the left hand; if by chance in the clean water, the future (husband or) wife will come to the bar of matrimony a maid; if in the foul, a widow; if in the empty dish, it foretells, with equal certainty, no marriage at all. It is repeated three times, and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered.—R. B.
- p. 1715—the year in which the Earl of Mar headed the insurrection.
- q. Sowens, with butter instead of milk to them, is always the Hallowe'en Supper.—R. B.

44. TO A MOUSE.

"It is difficult to decide," writes Currie, "whether this address should be considered as serious or comic. If we smile at the 'bickerin' brattle' of this little flying animal, it is a smile of tenderness and pity. The descriptive part is admirable; the moral reflections beautiful, arising directly out of the occasion; and in the conclusion there is a deep melancholy, a sentiment of doubt and dread that rises to the sublime." Gilbert Burns tells how the poem was the outcome of a real incident. The poet, while farming with his brother at Moss-giel, was holding the plough, with John Blane, the hired man, acting as driver, when the little creature was observed running off across the field. Blane, having the pette, or plough-cleaning utensil, in his hand at the moment, was thoughtlessly running after it, to kill it, when Burns checked him, but not angrily, asking what ill the poor mouse had ever done him. The poet then seemed to his driver to grow very thoughtful, and during the remainder of the afternoon he spoke not. In the night-time he awoke Blane, who slept with him, and reading the poem, which had in the meantime been composed, asked what he thought of the mouse now.

45. EPITAPH ON JOHN DOVE,
INNKEEPER.

First printed by Stewart & Meikle, Glasgow, in 1799. The subject, familiarly known as "Johnie Doo," was landlord of the Whiteford Arms, Mauchline.

46. EPITAPH FOR A WAG IN
MAUCHLINE.

The wag was James Smith, a draper in Mauchline—a brother of one of the "belles," and a member of "The Court of Equity"—to whom, as will be seen, the poet at a later period addressed a lengthened friendly Epistle.

47. ADAM ARMOUR'S PRAYER.

First printed in *The Scots Magazine*, in January, 1808. The party into whose lips the petition is put, was Jean

Armour's brother, rather under middle size, and "just the sort of fellow," it has been said, "as would be sure to be in a village row." The "Geordie" of the piece was the keeper of a low inn in Mauchline—George Gibson, to wit—the husband of "Poesie Nansie"—whose "jurr," or female servant, Agnes Wilson, had been guilty of some sexual error with one of her master's customers, which caused a kind of "hue and cry" against her in the neighbourhood. As a punishment for her offence, a number of reckless young fellows, and among them Adam Armour, made her "ride the stang"; that is, placed her forcibly astride a wooden pole, and carried her shoulder-high through the streets. Gibson, resenting the outrage on his maid, raised an action for assault and battery against the offenders. Armour absconded, and whilst skulking about in hidlings, the poet met him, and suggested that he required someone to pray for him. "Just do't yourself," Burns; I know no one so fit," Adam replied. Hence the "Prayer."

48. THE JOLLY BEGGARS.

Without question, the most dramatic, the most humorous, and the most nearly perfect, in the artistic sense, of all Burns's productions, this, though written in 1785, did not see the light of print—and then only in an imperfect form—till 1799, when it was published as one of the tracts "printed for, and sold by" Stewart & Meikle, Glasgow. "The subject truly is among the lowest in Nature," Carlyle remarks: "But it only the more shows our Poet's gift in raising it into the domain of Art. To our minds, this piece seems thoroughly compacted; melted together, refined, and poured forth in one flood of true *liquid* harmony. It is light, airy, soft of movement, yet sharp and precise in its details: every face is a portrait—that *raucle carlin*, that *wee Apollo*, the *Son of Mars*, are Scottish, yet ideal; the scene is at once a dream, and the very Ragcastle of 'Poesie Nansie.' Further, it seems in a considerable degree complete, a real self-supporting Whole, which is the highest merit in a poem." It is claimed to be

founded on the author's personal observation of a scene, just such as the cantata describes. With his friends, John Richmond and James Smith, Dr. Chambers tells, the poet dropped accidentally, at a late hour one night, into the house of "Poesie Nansie," or Mrs. Gibson, who kept a beggars' "ken" in Mauchline. After witnessing much jollity amongst the "randie gangrel bodies" assembled, the three young men came away; Burns professing to be greatly amused with the spectacle—and particularly with the behaviour of an old maimed soldier. In the course of a few days he recited a part of the poem to Richmond, who used to say that, to the best of his recollection, it contained, in its original form, songs by a sweep and a sailor, which did not afterwards appear. The piece was greatly admired by the Mossgiel household, but there is no evidence that Burns contemplated ever giving it to the world. On the contrary, he laid it aside, and in a few years had forgotten its existence. On being reminded of it by George Thomson, in 1793, he confessed this, and could but reply: "I remember that none of the songs pleased myself, except the last; something about—

'Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.'

49. THO' WOMEN'S MINDS.

This is a later version of the bard's first song in "The Jolly Beggars." When sending it to Johnson, for his third volume, which appeared in 1790, the poet says: "This song is mine, all except the Chorus."

50. THE COTTAR'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

"This," writes Lockhart, "is perhaps, of all Burns's pieces, the one whose exclusion from the collection, were such things possible nowadays, would be most injurious, if not to the genius, at least to the character of the man. In spite of many feeble lines and some heavy stanzas, it appears to me that even his genius would suffer more in estimation by being contemplated in absence of this poem than of any other single poem he has left us." Suggested

by Fergusson's not inferior poem, "The Farmer's Ingle," it was composed towards the close of the year 1785; and Gilbert gives the following distinct account of the origin of the piece: "Robert had frequently remarked to me that he thought there was something peculiarly venerable in the phrase, 'Let us worship God!' and by a decent, sober head of a family, introducing family worship. To this sentiment of the author the world is indebted for 'The Cottar's Saturday Night.' When Robert had not some pleasure in view in which I was not thought fit to participate, we used frequently to walk together, when the weather was favourable, on the Sunday afternoons. It was in one of these walks that I first had the pleasure of hearing the author repeat 'The Cottar's Saturday Night.' I do not recollect to have read or heard anything by which I was more highly electrified. The fifth and the sixth stanzas, and the eighteenth, thrilled with peculiar ecstasy through my soul. The 'Cottar' is an exact copy of my father, in his manner, his family devotion, and exhortations; yet the other parts of the description do not apply to our family—none of us were 'at service out, among the farmers roun'."

Robert Aiken, to whom the poem is dedicated, was a Solicitor and Surveyor of Taxes, in Ayr, with whom the poet was intimate in his early career. He introduced Burns to his much-esteemed friend, Gavin Hamilton; he subscribed for 105 copies of the Kilmarnock Edition; he is the "glib-tongued Aiken" of "Holy Willie's Prayer;" "Orator Bob" of "The Kirk's Alarm;" and "Aiken dear" of "The Farewell."

51. ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.

"It was, I think, in the winter of the year 1784," says Gilbert Burns, "as we were going with carts for coals to the family fire (and I could yet point out the particular spot), that Robert first repeated to me the 'Address to the Deil.' The curious idea of such an Address was suggested to him by running over in his mind the many ludicrous accounts and representations we have from various quarters of this

august personage." Gilbert, evidently, was a year wrong in his reckoning, and should have said 1785. Until the poet's quarrel with the Armours, the fifteenth stanza stood to read:—

"Lang syne in Eden's happy scene,
When strappin' Edie's days were green,
And Eve was like my bonie Jean—
My dearest part,
A dancin', sweet, young, handsome queen,
Wi' guileless heart."

Several clever "Replies" to this poem are in existence.

52. SCOTCH DRINK.

Burns sent a copy of this to his friend, Robert Muir, wine merchant, Kilmarnock, on 20th March, 1785. Suggested presumably by Fergusson's "Caller Water," the rhapsody should not be taken as proof in any measure of the poet's love of the "barley-brie." On the contrary, his brother Gilbert assures us that, "notwithstanding the praise he has bestowed on 'Scotch Drink'—which seems to have misled his historians—I do not recollect, during these seven years [the reference is to the Tarbolton period], nor till towards the end of his commencing author—when his growing celebrity occasioned his often being in company—to have ever seen him intoxicated, nor was he at all given to drinking."

The "Ferintosh! O sadly lost!" lamented in the nineteenth stanza, refers to a privileged distillery of the name, in Cromartyshire, belonging to Duncan Forbes of Culloden. In recognition of services rendered during Dundee's rebellion, the Scottish Parliament of 1690 granted the Forbeses perpetual liberty, on payment of a nominal sum in lieu of Excise, to distil grain at this "ancient brewery." The privilege was abolished in 1785.

53. THE AULD FARMER'S NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION TO HIS AULD MARE, MAGGIE.

Composed in the opening of the year 1786. The poet exhibits here, and nowhere else more lovably, his tender regard for the lower animals. Professor Wilson, in his Essay on Burns, tells that, to his knowledge, the recital of

this piece has brought tears of pleasure to the eyes, and "humanised the heart of, a Gilmerton carter."

54. THE TWA DOGS.

"Composed," says Gilbert, "after the resolution of publishing was nearly taken. Robert had had a dog which he called 'Luath' that was a great favourite. The dog had been killed by the wanton cruelty of some person the night before my father's death. Robert said to me that he should like to confer such immortality as he could bestow upon his old friend Luath, and that he had a great mind to introduce something into the book under the title of 'Stanzas to the Memory of a Quadruped Friend'; but the plan was given up for the tale as it now stands. Caesar was merely the creature of the poet's imagination, created for the purpose of holding chat with his favourite Luath." The factor whose portrait is here was doubtless the same of whom the poet writes in his letter to Dr. Moore, in 1787. "My indignation yet boils," he says, "at the scoundrel factor's insolent, threatening letters, which used to set us all in tears." It was Luath's successor, it is worth mentioning, whose appearance at the "penny dance" in Mauchline, following his master through the reel, led the poet to remark, in Jean Armour's hearing, that "he wished he could get any of the lasses to like him as well as his dog did."

55. THE AUTHOR'S EARNEST CRY AND PRAYER.

The poet here returns to the subject of "Scotch Drink"; and his reason for doing so is explained in the Chambers-Wallace "Burns," where we are told that "towards the close of the year 1785, loud complaints were made by the Scottish distillers as to the vexatious and oppressive manner in which the Excise laws were enforced at their establishments—such rigour, they said, being exercised at the instigation of the London distillers, who looked with jealousy on the success of their northern brethren. So great was the severity of the Excise, that many distillers were

obliged to abandon the trade, and the price of barley was beginning to be effected. Illicit distillation was also found to be alarmingly on the increase. In consequence of the earnest remonstrance of the distillers, backed by the County gentlemen, an act was passed in the Session of 1786 (alluded to by the poet), whereby the duties on low wines, spirits, etc., were discontinued, and an annual tax imposed on stills, according to their capacity. This act gave general satisfaction. It seems to have been during the general outcry against fiscal oppression, at the end of 1785 or beginning of 1786, that Burns composed 'The Author's Earnest Cry and Prayer.' Though ostensibly addressed to the "Scotch Representatives in the House of Commons," the "Cry," as will be seen, opens with a direct appeal to

"Ye Irish lords, ye knights and squires."

But up to and beyond the date of the composition, the eldest sons of Scottish peers were not eligible for election in Scotland; and we must regard the prominence given to "Irish lords," observes Scott Douglas, as a "pointed stroke of satire."

56. THE ORDINATION.

Composed on the occasion of the Rev. James Mackinlay being admitted to the second charge of the Laigh Kirk of Kilmarnock. The poem curiously anticipated the event by nearly two months. Mr. Mackinlay—the "Simper James" of "The Kirk's Alarm"—was not ordained minister of the charge in question until the 6th of April, 1786; yet, in a letter dated 27th February, the same year, and addressed to his friend John Richmond, then in Edinburgh, the poet, *inter alia*, remarks: "I have been very busy with the Muses since I saw you, and have composed among several others 'The Ordination,' a poem on Mr. Mackinlay's being called to Kilmarnock." Mackinlay was a member of the "Auld Licht," or orthodox school, to which the poet was opposed (hence the satire); and, notwithstanding which, the moderate or liberal party had no command of the sympathies of the bulk of the people. "Mr. Lindsay, ordained to the Laigh

Kirk in 1764," says Chambers, "was the first moderate clergyman known in the place. He was supposed to have obtained the appointment through the interest of his wife, whose maiden name was Margaret Lauder, who had been housekeeper to the Earl of Glencairn [see reference in second verse]. The general meaning of the stanza is that Common Sense—in other words, Arminian doctrine—was introduced into the Church of Kilmarnock by Mr. Lindsay; that Oliphant and Russell, two zealous Calvinists, had often attacked her; but that now Mr. Mackinlay, the new entrant, was likely to effect her complete extrusion. We obtain a notion of the general feeling of Kilmarnock respecting the moderate doctrine, from the fact that Mr. Lindsay's induction had to be effected by the use of force, and that his friends of the Presbytery were on that occasion so pelted as to be obliged to fly from the town." Mackinlay became a favourite preacher, and in time had the degree of D.D. conferred upon him. He survived till 1841.

57. EPISTLE TO JAMES SMITH.

The "Wag in Mauchline."—See Note 46.

In 1787 Smith became a partner in the Avon Print-works, Linlithgowshire. A year later he went to Jamaica, where he died. During the Armour troubles he stood the poet's friend "through thick and thin."

58. THE VISION.

One of the most dignified and widely-esteemed of all Burns's productions. In the Kilmarnock Edition, it is worth noting, the allusion to his Jean, in the description of the Muse's appearance—

"Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,
Till half a leg was scripply seen;
And such a leg! my bonie Jean
Could only peer it!"—

was replaced by the name of another charmer, and the third line there stands—

"And such a leg! my Bess, I ween."

The change was made, doubtless, in consequence of the quarrel of which the world knows perhaps more than

enough. Anyway, by the time the first Edinburgh Edition appeared, his old affections had reasserted their sway, and "Bess" disappeared, and "Jean" was restored to the place of honour she was so well entitled to occupy. The division of the poem into "Duans" is an imitation of Ossian. Thirteen stanzas of the piece, as originally composed, were withheld by the poet from publication, and were first printed by Chambers in 1852, from the Stair MS., then in the possession of Mr. Dick of Irvine. Subsequent editors have reprinted these stanzas; but what Burns himself regarded as unworthy of preservation should surely not be perpetuated.

- a. Catrine, the seat of the late Doctor and the present Professor Stewart—R. B.
 b. Colonel Fullerton.—R. B.

59. THE RANTIN DOG, THE DADDIE O'T.

"I composed this song," says the poet, "pretty early in life, and sent it to a young girl, a very particular acquaintance of mine, who was at the time under a cloud." It appears in the third volume of the *Museum*, with the tune, "The East Neuk o' Fife."

60. HERE'S HIS HEALTH IN WATER.

The first line of this is lifted from "Lewis Gordon." A set, with a second stanza, is in *The Merry Muses*. Stenhouse, in his usually emphatic way, states that Burns threw off the lines in a jocular allusion to his own and Jean Armour's awkward predicament before their marriage; while Allan Cunningham quite as emphatically denounces the suggestion as barbarous and insulting to both the lovers. "For our part," says Scott Douglas, "we see no flagrant inaptitude in the conjecture of Stenhouse." Indeed, it looks mighty feasible.

61. ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID.

This is pre-eminently, as Scott Douglas remarks, "one of those poems whose lines become 'mottoes of the heart.'" We find its suggestion in the *First Common Place Book*, where the poet, under date March, 1784, writes:

"I have often observed in the course of my experience of human life, that every man, even the worst, have something good about them, though very often nothing more than a happy temperament of constitution, inclining them to this or that virtue; on this, likewise, depend a great many, no man can say how many, of our vices: for this reason no man can say in what degree any man besides himself can be, with strict justice, called wicked. Let any of the strictest character for regularity of conduct among us examine impartially how many of his virtues are owing to constitution and education; how many vices he has never been guilty of—not from any care or vigilance, but from want of opportunity, or some accidental circumstance intervening; how many of the weaknesses of mankind he has escaped because he was out of the line of such temptation: and what often, if not always, weighs more than all the rest—how much he is indebted to the world's good opinion, because the world does not know all: I say, any man who can thus think, will scan the failings, nay, the faults and crimes of mankind around him with a brother's eye."

If this piece was composed, as appears, before the publication of the Kilmarnock Edition, it is matter for wonder why it was not included in that collection. The last two stanzas, at least, have been generally esteemed as beyond praise.

62. THE INVENTORY.

Composed in 1785, and first printed in the Liverpool Edition, edited by Currie, in 1800, this was sent in answer to an official mandate from Mr. Robert Aiken, Surveyor of Taxes in Ayr, demanding from the poet "a signed list of his horses, servants, wheel-carriages, etc., and whether he was a married man or a bachelor, and what children he had." We have met in Mauchline a relative of the "wee Davock" mentioned.

63. TO JOHN KENNEDY, DUMFRIES HOUSE.

This gentleman was factor to the Earl of Dumfries, and resided at

Dumfries House, two miles west of Cumnock. He died at Edinburgh in 1812. The verses formed the concluding portion of a letter to Kennedy in reply to a request from him to be favoured with a perusal of "The Cottar's Saturday Night." They were first printed by Cromek, in 1808.

64. TO A LOUSE.

The MS. of this is in the Bodleian Library, at Oxford. The "lady" whose bonnet displayed the "crawlin ferlie," it has been asserted, was one of the "belles" of Mauchline. The moral embraced in the last stanza has made the lines classic.

a. A bonnet named in honour of Vincent Lunardi, a balloonist, who made an ascent from London in September, 1785—the earliest in Britain.

65. THE HOLY FAIR.

Modelled on Fergusson's "Leith Races," this is universally admitted by far and away the ablest of all the satires Burns levelled at the Kirk. The piece was composed in the autumn of 1785 (though it may have been revised in the spring of the succeeding year), and is credited with depicting fairly, albeit somewhat freely, the celebration of the Holy Communion at Mauchline on the second Sunday of August in that year. Lockhart observes, that the same man should have produced "The Cottar's Saturday Night" and "The Holy Fair" about the same time, will ever continue to move wonder and regret. He yet contends that "The Holy Fair" was the last and best of that series of satires wherein the same set of persons were lashed. And continuing, he says: "Here, unlike the others that have been mentioned, satire keeps its own place, and is subservient to the poetry of Burns. This is indeed an extraordinary performance; no partisan of any sect can whisper that malice has formed its principal inspiration, or that its chief attraction lies in the boldness with which individuals, entitled and accustomed to respect, are held up to ridicule. Immediately on its publication it was acknowledged (amidst the sternest mutterings of wrath) that national manners were once more in the hands

of a NATIONAL POET." It is indeed true that scenes, just such as the poet describes, had become a scandal and disgrace to the Kirk all over the country. Dr. Edgar, in his *Old Church Life in Scotland*, tells that, while the population of the whole parish of Mauchline in 1755 was only 1169, the number of Communicants entered in the Session books for 1785 was 1242. The conduct of the crowds was nowhere, indeed, in consonance with the occasion; but rioting and drinking prevailed. Wherever there was a field Sacrament convened, "batches of wabster lads" came "blackguardin"—and not from Kilmarnock only, but from every populous centre. It was really more like a "fair" than a Holy Communion, and Burns was not the first to use the expression "Holy Fair" in the connection. The poem on its appearance, of course, was met by a storm of abuse from the pulpits; but amid all the railings that ensued, the clergy and people alike did not fail to lay its strictures to heart, and a general improvement in the conduct of all concerned was, happily, soon manifest. Notwithstanding the daring levity of some of the allusions and incidents in the poem, it deserves to be noted that the sacred rite itself is never once mentioned.

a. "Racer Jess," remarkable for her pedestrian feats, was the daughter of "Poosie Nansie."

b. A street so called which faces the tent in Mauchline.

66. AND MAUN I STILL ON MENIE DOAR.

Burns explains that the chorus of this is "part of a song composed by a gentleman in Edinburgh, a particular friend of the author's;" and that "Menie is the common abbreviation of Marianne." Written presumably soon after the rupture with Jean Armour, however, it has been shrewdly suggested that the "gentleman in Edinburgh" was none other than the bard himself, and "Jeanie" should have stood in the text instead of "Menie."

67. TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY.

Enclosed, under the title of "The Gowan," together with a rhymed

epistle, in a letter addressed to John Kennedy (see Note 63), in April, 1785. "I have here likewise," says the poet, "enclosed a small piece, the very latest of my productions. I am a good deal pleased with some of the sentiments myself, as they are just the native querulous feelings of a heart which (as the elegantly melting Gray says) 'Melancholy has marked for her own.'" The field of the "Daisy"—for the incident of the poem is real—lies next to that on the farm of Mossgiel in which the nest of the mouse was turned up, and both are still pointed out to admiring visitors.

68. THE LAMENT.

"The unfortunate issue," not of a "friend," but of his own "amour"—when Jean Armour, overborne by paternal authority, agreed to discard him—and composed, Gilbert informs us, "after the first distraction of his feelings had a little subsided."

69. WILL YE GO TO THE INDIES, MY MARY?

Sent to Thomson in October, 1792, as a substitute for "Will ye Gang to the Ewe-bughts, Marion?" Burns wrote: "In my very early years, when I was thinking of going to the West Indies, I took the following farewell of a dear girl. It is quite trifling, and has nothing of the merits of the 'Ewe-bughts,' but it will fill up this page." Thomson, with his usual uncertain taste, replied: "This is a very poor song, which I do not mean to include in my Collection;" and he left it out. Mary Campbell, or "Highland Mary," is the supposed heroine.

70. MY HIGHLAND LASSIE, O.

"This," writes the poet, in the notes in Johnson's *Museum*, which he made for Captain Riddell of Glenriddell, "was a composition of mine in very early life, before I was at all known to the world. My Highland lassie [Mary Campbell] was a warm-hearted, charming young creature as ever blessed a man with generous love. After a pretty long tract of the most ardent

reciprocal attachment, we met by appointment on the second Sunday of May, in a sequestered spot by the banks of the Ayr, where we spent the day in taking farewell before she should embark for the West Highlands, to arrange matters for our projected change of life. At the close of the autumn following, she crossed the sea to meet me at Greenock, where she had scarce landed when she was seized with a malignant fever, which hurried my dear girl to the grave in a few days, before I could even hear of her illness."

71. EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND.

This greatly admired and much-quoted poem, so creditable to the heart of the poet, was addressed to Andrew Hunter Aiken, the son of the author's early patron, Robert Aiken, to whom "The Cottar's Saturday Night" is inscribed (see Note 50). In a holograph copy, dated "Mossgiel, 15th May, 1786," the following extra stanza, introduced between the sixth and seventh, appears, which might very well form part of the poem:—

"If ye hae made a step aside—
Some hap mistake o'erta'en you,
Yet still keep up a decent pride,
And ne'er o'er far demean you.
Time comes wi' kind oblivious shade,
And daily darker sets it;
And if nae mair mistakes are made,
The world soon forgets it."

72. A DREAM.

"The merits of this poem," says Allan Cunningham, "are of a high order—the gaiety as well as the keenness of the satire, and the vehement rapidity of the verse, are not its only attractions. Even the prose introduction is sarcastic. His falling asleep over the Laureate's Ode was a likely consequence, for the birthday strains of those times were something of the dullest." The Laureate of the period was Thomas Warton.

73. A DEDICATION.

Written evidently with a view to its occupying a place in the front of the Kilmarnock Edition, though, for some unknown reason, it occupies instead a position near the close of the volume. This characteristic effusion embraces

many lines frequently quoted by the poet's admirers. Indeed, the bard's correspondence testifies, as Scott Douglas points out, that he was himself fond of quoting its couplets occasionally.

74. VERSIFIED NOTE TO DR. MACKENZIE, MAUCHLINE.

First published in Hogg and Motherwell's Edition, 1835. The masonic date attached signifies A.D. 1786. Dr. James Mackenzie, who set up as a practitioner at Mauchline after completing his course at the University of Edinburgh, was one of the poet's warmest friends there. He attended William Burnes during his last illness at Lochlie, on which occasion the bard and he became acquainted. He introduced Burns to Sir James Whiteford, Professor Dugald Stewart, and other persons of influence.

75. THE FAREWELL.

First published by Hamilton Paul, in 1819. This was written in June or July, 1786, while the poet was still full of the intention of sailing for Jamaica before the close of August the same year.

76. ON A SCOTCH BARD.

These playful verses—yet withal not lacking a pathetic touch here and there—of which the poet is himself the hero, were probably among the very latest written for the Kilmarnock Edition.

77. FAREWELL TO ELIZA.

Chambers, from a variety of circumstances, came to the evidently sound conclusion that "Eliza" here was the "braw Miss Betty" of the "six proper young belles," distinguished by the poet in his canzone, "The Belles of Mauchline" (see Note 30).

78. A BARD'S EPITAPH.

"Here," says Wordsworth, "is a sincere and solemn avowal—a public declaration from his own will—a confession at once devout, poetical, and human—a history in the shape of a prophecy." The piece is, appropriately, the last in the Kilmarnock Edition.

79. EPITAPH FOR ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ.

A kindly compliment to the amiable gentleman to whom "The Cottar's Saturday Night" is inscribed.

80. EPITAPH ON "WEE JOHNNIE."

It has been commonly assumed that Burns satirised in these lines his own printer, John Wilson of Kilmarnock. We prefer to believe that such is not correct, and that another "Wee Johnnie," with less soul, remains to be discovered.

81. THE LASS O' BALLOCHMYLE.

Written in 1786, this widely-esteemed song was inspired by Miss Wilhelmina Alexander, the sister of Mr. Claud Alexander, who had shortly before succeeded the Whitefoords as proprietor of Ballochmyle. On the 19th November, that year, the poet enclosed the verses in a letter to Miss Alexander, in which he wrote: "I had roved out, as chance directed, in the favourite haunts of my Muse, on the banks of the Ayr, to view Nature in all the gaiety of the vernal year. The evening sun was flaming over the distant Western hills; not a branch stirred the crimson opening blossom, or the verdant spreading leaf. It was a golden moment for a poetic heart. Such was the scene, and such was the hour, when in a corner of my prospect I spied one of the fairest pieces of Nature's workmanship that ever crowned the poetic landscape, or met a poet's eye. The enclosed song was the work of my return home, and perhaps it but poorly answers what might have been expected from such a scene." Much to the mortification of Burns, the lady took no notice, for the time being, of either the letter or the song. In her later career, however, it is known, she set a high value on the compliment designed, and exhibited with pride, on many occasions, the song and letter together. Now they occupy a frame on the walls of the "spence" at Mossiel, where they are objects of never-failing interest to pious visitors. Miss Alexander died, unmarried, as late as 1843. Only two verses of the song—the third and fourth—are generally sung.

82. LINES TO AN OLD SWEETHEART.

Peggy Thomson of Kirkoswald (see Notes 6 and 20). The lines are thus prefaced by the poet in the Glenriddell MS.: "Written on the blank leaf of a copy of the first edition of my Poems, which I presented to an old sweetheart, then married—'twas the girl I mentioned in my letter to Dr. Moore, where I speak of taking the sun's altitude. Poor Peggy! Her husband [Mr. Neilson] is my old acquaintance, and a most worthy fellow. When I was taking leave of my Carrick relations, intending to go to the West Indies, when I took farewell of her, neither she nor I could speak a syllable. Her husband escorted me three miles on my road, and we parted with tears."

83. THE CALF.

"A merely extemporaneous production, on a wager with Mr. Hamilton, that I would not produce a poem on the subject in a given time," says the poet in a letter to Robert Muir. It was written on Sunday, 3rd September, 1786, after listening to a sermon by the Rev. James Steven, who had preached from the text quoted under the title. As originally composed and read to Gavin Hamilton and Dr. Mackenzie, at the close of the service, the piece consisted of four stanzas; but two more—the fourth and sixth—were subsequently added.

84. WILLIE CHALMERS.

Lockhart received this very felicitous production from Lady Harriet Don, to whom it had been sent by the poet, with the explanation that "William Chalmers, a gentleman in Ayrshire, a particular friend of mine, asked me to write a poetic epistle to a young lady, his Dulcinea. I had seen her, but was scarcely acquainted with her." Chalmers was a lawyer in Ayr. History deponeth not how the epistle advanced his suit; but few lovers, surely, who could not plead their own cause had ever a heartier word said for them.

85. REPLY TO A TRIMMING EPISTLE RECEIVED FROM A TAILOR.

Thomas Walker, who resided at Pool, near Ochiltree. "He was rather an eccentric character," says Scott Douglas, "and could string rhymes together fluently." The Epistle which he addressed to Burns, and which provoked the Reply in the text, had in it these stanzas, among seven others:—

"What waefu' news is this I hear,
Frae greetin' I can scarce forbear,
Folks tell me ye'er gaun off this year,
Out o'er the sea;
Our lasses wham ye lo'e sae dear,
Will greet for thee.

* * * * *
Whaur thou art gaun, keep mind frae me,
Seek Him to bear thee companie,
And, Robin, when ye come to dee,
Ye'll win aboon,
An' live at peace an' amity
Ayont the moon.

Some tell me, Rab, ye dinna fear
To get a wean, an' curse an' swear:
I'm unco wae, my lad, to hear
O' sic a trade.
Cou'd I persuade ye to forbear,
I wad be glad."

86. THE BRIGS OF AYR.

Written in 1786. At this time a new bridge was begun to be erected over the Ayr, to connect the county town with its suburbs, and to supersede the inconvenient structure built in the reign of Alexander III., which, however, is still standing, and yielding foot-service, although even then it was regarded by many as in a dangerous condition. The question as to whether the "Auld Brig" should be merely widened and repaired, or a "New Brig" should be built, had been much debated in Council and elsewhere; and the advocates of a new and improved structure prevailed mainly through the exertions of the then Dean of Guild, John Ballantine, Burns's friend, to whom the poem is dedicated. In relation to the boast of the "Auld Brig," as expressed in the dialogue, that it would "be a brig" when its upstart rival would be "a shapeless cairn," it is worthy of note that the sinister prophecy was all but literally fulfilled in 1877, when the new structure was so injured by floods that the arch at the south end fell, and the whole bridge had to be

pulled down. It was rebuilt then at a cost of £15,000; and additional repairs, involving an outlay of £2000, were again found necessary in 1881. The model, though not the rival of the piece, is found in Fergusson's "Mutual Complaint of Plainstones and Causeway." In a holograph MS. in the possession of the Earl of Rosebery, the title stands, "The Brigs of Ayr: a True Story," and in an early draft possessed by Mr. Waugh of Settle, the heading is, "The Brigs of Ayr: an Eclogue."

- a. A noted tavern at the Auld Brig end.—R. B.
- b. The two steeples.—R. B.
- c. The Goss-hawk, or Falcon.—R. B.
- d. A noted ford, just above the Auld Brig.—R. B.
- e. The banks of Gargal Water is one of the few places in the West of Scotland where those fancy-scaring beings, known by the name of Ghaists, still continue pertinaciously to inhabit.—R. B.
- f. The source of the River Ayr.—R. B.
- g. A small landing-place above the large quay.—R. B.
- h. A well-known performer of Scottish music on the violin.—R. B.

87. THE NIGHT WAS STILL.

First published in Blackie's *Land of Burns*, 1840. The MS. of this fragment was given to Miss Louisa, the youngest daughter of the Rev. Dr. Lawrie of Newmilns, and commemorates a dance at the manse, in September, 1786, when the poet for the first time listened to the spinet.

88. PRAYER—O THOU DREAD POWER.

See preceding Note. Chambers tells that the morning after the dance Burns did not make his appearance at the breakfast-table at the usual hour. Dr. Lawrie's son went to inquire for him, and met him on the stair. The young man asked if he had slept well. "Not well," was the reply; "the fact is, I have been praying half the night. If you go up to my room, you will find my prayer on the table."

89. FAREWELL TO THE BANKS OF Ayr.

"I composed this song," the poet writes in the interleaved copy of Johnson's *Museum*, "as I conveyed my

chest so far on my road to Greenock, where I was to embark in a few days for Jamaica. I meant it as my farewell dirge to my native land."

90. ON MEETING WITH LORD DAER.

The Lord Daer here was Basil William Douglas-Hamilton, the second son of the fourth Earl of Selkirk. He was the guest of Professor Dugald Stewart at Catrine, when the poet met him at the dinner referred to. Of the verses, Burns wrote to Dr. Mackenzie two days afterwards that they "were really extempore, but a little corrected since."

91. TAM SAMSON'S ELEGY.

First printed in the Edinburgh Edition, 1887. "When this worthy old sportsman went out, last muirfowl season," writes the poet, "he supposed it was to be, in Ossian's phrase, 'the last of his fields,' and expressed an ardent wish to die and be buried on the muirs. On this hint the author composed his elegy and epitaph." The hero, Cunningham further tells, was a respectable old nursery-seedsman in Kilmarnock, greatly addicted to sport, and one of the poet's earliest friends, who loved curling on the ice in winter, and shooting on the moors in the season. When no longer able to march over hill and hag, he used to lie on the long settle and listen to the deeds of others on field and flood; and when a good tale was told, he would cry, "Hech, man! three at a shot, that was famous!" Someone having informed Tam that Burns had written a poem—"a grey queer ane"—concerning him, he sent for the bard, and, in something like wrath, requested to hear it. He smiled grimly at the relation of his exploits, and then cried out, "I'm no dead yet, Robin—I'm worth ten dead fowk; wherefore should you say that I am dead?" Burns took the hint, retired to the window for a minute or so, and coming back, recited the *per contra*—

"Go, Fame, and canter like a fillie, etc."—

with which Tam was so delighted that he rose unconsciously, rubbed his hands, and exclaimed, "That'll do, ha! ha! ha!—"

that'll do." He died in 1795, and the "Epitaph" is inscribed on his tombstone in the yard of the Laigh Kirk, in Kilmarnock, adjoining those of the two ministers, Mackinlay and Robertson, mentioned in the first stanza.

92. EPISTLE TO MAJOR LOGAN.

A retired military officer, of some repute as a fiddler and wit, who lived with his mother and sister at Park, near Ayr.

93. A WINTER NIGHT.

Carlyle observes very eloquently on this poem that it is "worth a whole volume of homilies on mercy, for it is the voice of Mercy itself. Burns lives in sympathy; his soul reaches forth into all the realms of being; nothing that has existence can be indifferent to him."

94. YON WILD MOSSY MOUNTAINS.

In the *Museum*, Vol. IV. This is held by some to refer to Mary Campbell; but the poet himself says only, "The song alludes to a part of my private history which is of no consequence to the world to know."

95. ADDRESS TO EDINBURGH.

Composed soon after his arrival in the city in 1786, this was sent by the poet, along with another piece, to his friend William Chalmers, accompanied by a letter, in which he says: "I enclose you two poems which I have carded and spun since I passed Glenbuck. 'Fair Burnet' is the heavenly Miss Burnet, daughter of Lord Monboddo, at whose house I have had the honour to be more than once. There has not been anything nearly like her in all the combinations of beauty, grace, and goodness the great Creator has formed, since Milton's Eve on the first day of her existence." The MS., given by the poet to Lady Don, is in the University of Edinburgh.

96. ADDRESS TO A HAGGIS.

A writer in the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*, in 1829, says: "About sixteen years ago there resided at Mauchline,

Mr. Robert Morrison, cabinetmaker. He was a great crony of Burns's, and it was in Mr. Morrison's house that the poet usually spent the 'mids o' the day' on Sunday. It was in this house that he wrote the celebrated 'Address to a Haggis,' after partaking liberally of that dish, as prepared by Mrs. Morrison." As the piece appears in the *Caledonian Mercury*, where it was sent by the author, in 1786, the closing verse runs:—

"Ye Powers wha gie us a' that's gude,
Still bless auld Caledonia's brood,
Wi' great John Barleycorn's heart's blude
In stoups and luggies;
And on our board that King o' food,
A glorious Haggis!"

It was from a misprinting of the word "skinking" in the last verse of the permanent copy that what is familiarly known as the "Stinking Edition" of the poet's works took its name.

97. RATTLIN, ROARIN WILLIE.

The last verse of this only is by Burns; and he writes in the interleaved copy of the *Museum* that he composed that, and reset the song, "out of compliment to one of the worthiest fellows in the world, William Dunbar, Esq., Writer to the Signet, Edinburgh, and Colonel to the Crochallan Corps, a club of wits who took that title at the time of raising the fencible regiments." Dunbar became Inspector-General of Stamp Duties in Scotland. He died in 1807.

98. BONIE DUNDEE.

Burns composed only the last two stanzas of this; and, sending the song to his friend, Robert Cleghorn, he says: "You will see by the above that I have added to 'Bonie Dundee.' If you think it will do, you may set it agoing on a ten-stringed instrument and on the psaltery." He did not, however, improve appreciably on the old ditty.

99. INSCRIPTION FOR THE HEADSTONE OF FERGUSSON, THE POET.

On the 6th of February, 1787, as has been so frequently told to his honour, Burns presented a petition to the

kirkyard managers of the Canongate in Edinburgh, craving permission to "lay a small stone" over the "revered ashes" of his "elder brother in the Muses"—Robert Fergusson—for whose genius he ever entertained the most tender and proud regard. His request was unanimously granted, and two years later—the delay being chiefly due to the dilatoriness of the architect employed—the stone was erected, which—preserved in good order by a subsequent bequest—still "directs pale Scotia's way to pour her sorrows o'er the poet's dust." The inscription reads:—

"HERE LIES ROBERT FERGUSSON,
POET.

"Born 5th September, 1751.—Died 16th October, 1774." Then follows the first four lines of the text, and on the reverse side appears:—

"By special grant of the managers to Robert Burns, who erected this stone, this burial-place is to remain for ever sacred to the memory of Robert Fergusson."

100. EPISTLE TO MRS. SCOTT.

Currie, in 1800, printed only the three opening stanzas of this delightful effusion, under the heading of, "On my Early Days"; and "most unaccountably," as Scott Douglas remarks, "the piece was withdrawn from all subsequent editions, and was not restored even by Gilbert Burns in 1820." Mrs. Scott of Wauchope House, whose maiden name was Rutherford, was the niece of Mrs. Cockburn, the authoress of that version of "The Flowers of the Forest" beginning, "I've seen the smiling of fortune beguiling." She had sent the poet a lengthy, complimentary letter in rhyme, soon after his arrival in Edinburgh, and the Epistle in the text was his answer to that.

101. TO MISS ISABELLA MACLEOD.

Printed in *The Burns Chronicle* for 1895, from the manuscript in the possession of Mrs. Vincent Burns Scott, Adelaide. It had, however, previously appeared in a Dumfries

newspaper. The poet made the acquaintance of Miss Macleod during his first visit to Edinburgh.

102. THE BONIE MOOR-HEN.

Adapted from an older and more indelicate ditty embraced in *The Merry Muses*, each successive stanza of which begins with the line:—

"I rede ye beware o' the ripples, young man."

103. MY LORD A-HUNTING.

In Johnson's *Museum*, Vol. VI., this appears with the note: "Written for this work by Robert Burns." Stenhouse tells how Johnson long hesitated to admit it; but, being blamed for such fastidiousness, he at length gave it a place.

104. A BOTTLE AND FRIEND.

Gilbert Burns expressed his doubts about Robert being the author of these lines. Pickering, however, claims that he printed them into the Aldine Edition from a copy in the poet's handwriting.

105. HEY, CA THRO'.

Suggested by an old rhyme common in the coast towns of Fife, part of which is preserved in the first verse and chorus.

106. ADDRESS TO WILLIAM TYTLER, ESQ., OF WOODHOUSELEE.

Mr. Tytler, a Writer to the Signet in Edinburgh, had assisted Johnson with the first volume of the *Museum*. Among other works, historical and literary, he was author of a *Vindication of Mary Queen of Scots*—hence the reference in the opening line. To the Epistle (which was accompanied by a copy of the Beugo engraving) a few lines of prose were added, thus: "My Muse jilted me here, and turned a corner on me, and I have not got again into her good graces. I have two requests to make. Burn the above verses when you have read them, as any little sense that is in them is rather heretical; and do me the justice to believe me sincere in my grateful remembrance of the many civilities you have honoured me with